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# THE STORY OF THE ISLAND STEAMERS

1818-1910



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38  
47  
To the Admiral of the fleet  
{and other things}

From his friend

Locke

215

# **THE STORY OF THE ISLAND STEAMERS**

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Wreck of Steamer "Monohansett" on the Rocks at Misery Island, Salem Harbor, in June, 1904.  
A Total Loss. From a Photograph in possession of Seth P. Ewer, of Springfield, Mass.

# THE STORY OF THE ISLAND STEAMERS

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By Harry B. Turner



NANTUCKET FREEZE-UPS  
THE STORY OF THE CAMELS  
A FEW REMINISCENCES



ILLUSTRATED

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The Inquirer and Mirror Press,  
Nantucket, Mass.



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Nantucket, Mass.*

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## PREFACE

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It is solely for the purpose of preserving valuable data and interesting anecdotes in connection with the operation of past and present steamboats across Nantucket sound, that the writer presents this "Story of the Island Steamers" in book form, believing that in so doing he meets the wishes of a large number of persons, both resident and non-resident, who maintain, either by birth, lineage or association, a vital interest in the islands of Nantucket and Marthas Vineyard, and their past, present and future.

This compilation of facts and anecdotes is the result of many months of careful research through newspaper files, private diaries and family records, as well as recollections related by aged citizens of the two islands, without whose valued assistance many of the most interesting features of the book would not appear.

While it is impossible to vouch for the authenticity of the entire data contained in the following pages, it is undoubtedly as nearly correct as it is possible to make it, in view of the loss of books and records bearing on the first three decades of "steamboating," and of the passing away of the men who, were they alive, could relate details which are lacking and beyond the reach of the present generation.

To Chauncey G. Whiten and Henry B. Worth of New Bedford, Elisha T. Jenks of Middleboro, Alfred Bunker of Roxbury, Alexander Starbuck of Waltham, Joshua Smith of Rockland, George H. Furber of Edgartown, Mrs. J. J. Fish, Charles H. Davis, Arthur H. Gardner, Alanson S. Barney, Judge Thaddeus C. Defriez, Capt. Alden H. Adams and Henry Paddack, of Nantucket, and all other persons who have in any way assisted in the compilation of the historical matter contained in this book, the undersigned feels deeply indebted.

HARRY B. TURNER.

Nantucket, Mass., May 20, 1910.

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## THE STORY OF THE ISLAND STEAMERS.

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### CHAPTER I.

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**T**HE history of the steamers which have traversed Nantucket sound covers a period of nearly one hundred years, during which the world has seen a complete revolution in shipping and commerce, has seen the sloop and packet service give way to the ships and clippers, and sail to steam; has witnessed an improvement in steam navigation until it has apparently reached a stage of perfection. The island service commenced when steam navigation was in embryo form, almost before a steamboat had been proven a feasible and practicable means of transportation. It is certain that Nantucket was one of the first places in the United States to become impregnated with the enthusiasm incident to Robert Fulton's successful inauguration of "steam" on the Hudson river in 1807, and but a few years after the famous "Clermont" made her memorable trip between New York and Albany, a steamboat almost as crude in model was plowing her way across the sound to and from Nantucket—not many months after the first steamer (the "Massachusetts") entered Boston harbor in 1817.

Nantucket was at that period one of the leading ports in the commonwealth, with a population of about nine thousand, and the whaling industry was increasing steadily as the years rolled by. Hence the promoters of this first steamboat line between the island and the mainland were merely keeping "up with the times" and they actually inaugurated the first schedule of steam navigation in New England, for the advent of a steamer in Boston harbor a few months previous was not upon

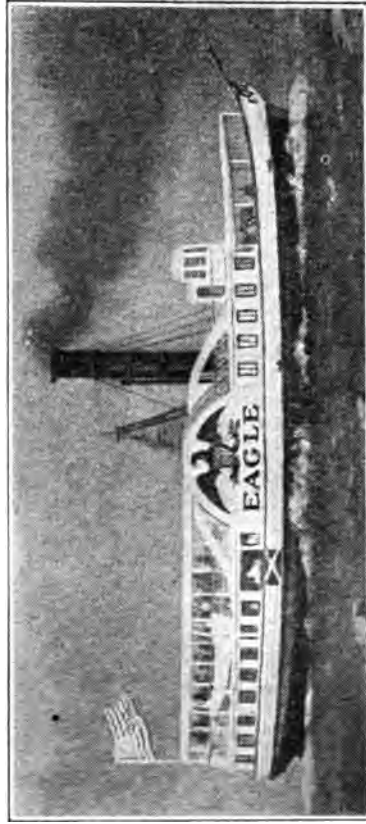
a regular schedule and her trips were mostly in the nature of "excursions."

### THE FIRST VENTURE.

The island's commerce and prosperity were receiving attention from all quarters of the globe at this period, and even though steam navigation was practically in its infancy, it was but fitting that Nantucket should be one of the first places on the Atlantic coast to adopt Fulton's invention. The first steamer to cross Nantucket sound was the "Eagle," an awkward little boat of about eighty tons, which was built at New London, Ct., early in the year 1818. This boat made her first trip to Nantucket on the 5th of May, with about sixty passengers, among whom were Friends to attend the "quarterly meeting." Two weeks later the "Eagle" again visited the island, and on the 25th of June, 1818, commenced making scheduled trips between Nantucket and New Bedford. The quickest passage which this little steamer is said to have made between these two places was on the 30th of July, when she covered the distance in eight hours and seven minutes, without stops.

As will be seen from the accompanying illustration, the "Eagle" was of peculiar model and queer construction, yet at that period, which was almost the beginning of "steamboating," she was considered a remarkable vessel—a big improvement over the "Clermont," and, as one old diary records it, "very fast and seaworthy." The description of the "Eagle" found among old papers is very meagre, and the Bureau of Navigation makes the plain statement that she was 92 feet long, 17.8 feet beam, with 6.8 feet depth of hold, and had a figure head and round stern. It is known that she had two copper boilers and burned wood for fuel—as did all of the steamers running to Nantucket prior to 1842.

To the "Eagle" also belongs the credit for towing the first vessel into Nantucket harbor under steam, this craft being the whaleship "George," which returned from a Pacific ocean whaling voyage on July 24, 1818, with 2,016 barrels of sperm oil on board. The "Eagle" took the ship in tow outside the bar and brought her around Brant point, hundreds of the townspeople going to the water front to witness the event.



The "Eagle," the First Steamer to Cross Nantucket Sound. Built in 1818.  
From a Painting in the Possession of George P. Cushing, General Manager of the  
Nantasket Beach Steamboat Company.





The "Eagle" made regular trips to Nantucket for three months in 1818, but the venture proved unprofitable, through lack of patronage and the heavy expense necessary in operating the steamer, so the promoters of the project gave it up the latter part of September and decided to sell the boat. They found a ready sale for her, and a week after leaving Nantucket the "Eagle" was placed in service between Boston and Hingham, being the first boat to make trips between those places. Nantucket, however, was the first place to have the "Eagle," which fact is worthy of note, even though her service was a financial failure.

The little boat's trips on the Boston-Hingham route were very irregular until the summer of 1819, when she commenced making scheduled passages across the bay, and continued in service there until the year 1821, when she was sold. It is said that the owners of the "Eagle" received as much for the two copper boilers when they sold her as the boat cost when new. The fact that the steamer could not be run with profit either on the Nantucket or the Hingham route would indicate that the cost of operation must have been enormous and the amount of business very light.

#### OTHER STEAMBOAT PROJECTS.

From the time the "Eagle" left Nantucket on September 21, 1818—until the 20th of May, 1824, no other steamer came to the island, the failure of the first project putting a damper on the idea of steam navigation across Nantucket sound, which could not be shaken off for some years. On the 20th of May, 1824, however, a boat named the "Connecticut" made a trip "under steam," under command of Capt. R. S. Bunker, a Nantucket man who had his own ideas about the ultimate success of steam navigation and wanted to prove to the islanders that steam was an advantage over sail as a means of communication between Nantucket and the mainland. The island's commerce was growing rapidly, and it is said that Captain Bunker thought he could enthruse enough interest among the island people to start a steamboat line; but in this he failed, for it is noted that the "Connecticut" was the object of little concern at that time, Nantucket's mariners and ship-owners refusing to give weight

to the belief that steam propulsion had proved successful and of use to the maritime world. In its issue following the departure of the "Connecticut," the Inquirer commented:

"As ocular demonstration often makes a much deeper and more lasting impression on the feelings and judgment than any other kind of proof, it is hoped the little specimen of steam navigation lately exhibited to the citizens of this town will remove all doubts, if doubts may still remain, of the utility of a steamboat to ply between Nantucket and the continent."

## CHAPTER II.

### BRIEF SERVICE OF THE "HAMILTON."

In the spring of 1828 the steamer "Hamilton" was put on the route between Nantucket and New Bedford, under command of a Captain Luce of Vineyard Haven. She was owned by Barney Corey and James Hathaway, of New Bedford, was built in Philadelphia, and was much smaller than the "Eagle"—being a craft of but fifty tons—and was of an even cruder model. This steamer had very little power and could make a trip across Nantucket sound only under the most favorable conditions, being unable to stem a strong wind or head tide, and it is said that when she was obliged to meet these combined adverse conditions, she had to turn about and go the other way. Writing to the Nantucket Inquirer in the early forties, in response to an inquiry regarding the "Hamilton," the late William R. Easton said:

"She was a complete failure as a steamboat, and was built low in the water, with only one deck, and had not power enough to get out of her own way. When off Brant point, bound to New Bedford, in the strength of the tide, I have seen this boat held at bay for some minutes; and when she drew near to Woods Holl, the order would be given, 'Throw under a tar barrel!' and the famous Hamilton would be spirited through by that means. We had at that period ten ropewalks in operation and tar barrels were cheap, and a goodly supply was kept on board the boat for this special purpose. Charles Russell was agent and clerk. I think the boat was run only one season."

From the above statement it would appear that the "Hamilton" actually was the "tub" that tradition says she was, and the fact that she burned tar barrels under her boilers would give weight to the statement that the stream of sparks which constantly issued from her stack when under way made the people allude to her as "the Dragon."

During her brief service on the Nantucket route, the "Ham-

ilton" made one quite notable trip to the island—on the 3d of July, 1828, when she brought thirty-three members of the Light Infantry over from New Bedford for the holiday, accompanied by the Middleboro band. This was only the second time Nantucket had ever been visited by a military company, and the islanders did everything in their power to give the visitors a pleasant outing, the ships in the harbor being decorated in their honor. The militia had its camp on Mill Hill, but the night of the 3d a severe storm came, and the tents blew down. The town authorities then placed the Lyceum Building at the disposal of the visitors, and they "camped indoors" during the remainder of their stay.

On Sunday the company attended church in full uniform, and on Monday enjoyed the hospitality of the inhabitants, being invited to drill before the mansions of the wealthy merchants, and after the exhibition refreshments were served. \*Capt. James D. Thompson was in command of the company, and in relating the experience to a correspondent of the *Inquirer* and *Mirror* in 1889, he gave the following details:

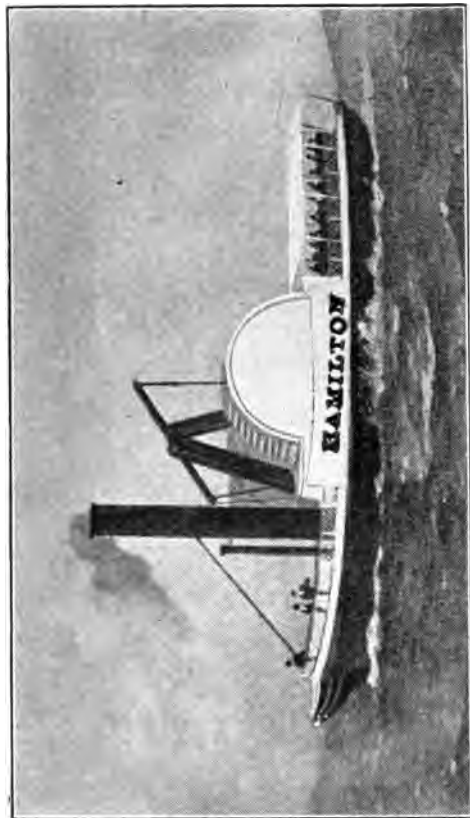
"One of these houses in front of which we drilled was owned by Aaron Mitchell. He was delighted with the exhibition, and when it was over invited us in. With other refreshments were several decanters of liquor, but as it was a rule of the company that no man should touch liquor while in uniform, Mr. Mitchell removed it upon my request. At another place a tub of lemonade was prepared. The outing was a very enjoyable one, and on Tuesday we returned to New Bedford on the *Hamilton*."

An absolute failure on the island route, the "*Hamilton*" left Nantucket in the fall of 1828, and it is something of a coincidence that she also went upon the Hingham route for a time, as did the "*Eagle*" before her. Her name was then changed to the "*Lafayette*," but the boat was in existence only a few years and was then broken up.

The fact should be here stated that some doubt exists in

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\*Captain Thompson received his commission to a cadetship at West Point in 1824, signed by J. C. Calhoun. After passing through all the gradations of the state militia, Captain Thompson was made Major-General by the Legislature. He often referred to his visit to Nantucket on the crude steamer "*Hamilton*" as one of the most pleasant and unique events transpiring during his young manhood.



Steamer "Hamilton," Which Could Stem Neither Wind Nor Tide.  
Built in 1828.



the minds of steamboat authorities as to the proper illustration of the two steamers which first crossed Nantucket sound. Some of them claim that the names appearing on the pictures should be reversed—that the boat shown as the “Hamilton,” being of cruder model and more the style of the first steamers in existence, must have been the “Eagle,” and is illustrated with the wrong name on her paddle-boxes. All authorities agree, however, that these pictures are without question of the two first steamers in the island service, but opinions differ as to which was actually in service first. However, if statements made in print by the late William R. Easton, Frederick C. Sanford, the Hon. John Morissey and others, several decades ago, are to be relied upon, the pictures of the “Eagle” and “Hamilton” are correct as they appear at this time.

The same year the “Hamilton” was in service, and four years after her first visit, Captain Bunker again brought the steamer “Connecticut” to Nantucket. This time she was towing some kind of a dredging machine, a project being on foot to dig a ship channel from the inner harbor out across the bar. The “Connecticut” arrived in port on Friday, October 24th, 1828, and the following morning the dredger was placed in operation about the wharves, and with her 12 horse-power engine removed a ton and a half of mud a minute on an average, but for lack of finances, the channel was not dug more than a distance of one hundred feet. The day after her arrival, the “Connecticut” started for Falmouth with over three hundred of the Nantucket people on board, but went only a short distance beyond the bar, where the conditions were found too rough to proceed, so the steamer returned to the inner harbor, making a few sweeps before running up to her berth. She returned to New York on the 29th.



### CHAPTER III.

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#### JACOB BARKER AND THE "MARCO BOZZARIS."

Following the departure of the "Hamilton," the next information made by the Nantucket Inquirer of any steamboat scheme was in its issue of December 27, 1828, when the editor wrote:

"We are pleased to see the subject of a steamboat between this port and the continent, again in agitation. Captain Williams is now here to ascertain what investments can be obtained on this island, towards accomplishing the proposed enterprise. We understand that gentlemen in Boston and New Bedford are friendly to the undertaking and ready to take a liberal portion of shares, so that it now seems to depend principally on the citizens of Nantucket, to say whether a steamboat line shall be established, and we believe every friend to the general prosperity of this town will give his voice in the affirmative."

This project did not materialize, for lack of capital, but in the meantime the famous merchant \*Jacob Barker, a wealthy and influential man of Nantucket lineage, who maintained broker's offices in New York and Liverpool, had at his own expense constructed a steamer for the Nantucket service, be-

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\*Jacob Barker was the first man to ship cotton from this country to St. Petersburg, and he was something of a financial power in those days. At the outbreak of the war of 1812 he was employed by the government to raise a loan of five million dollars, and he was accredited with being successful in every undertaking. In 1825 the merchants and banks of Nantucket became embarrassed; they applied to Jacob Barker and through his agency secured a loan of three hundred thousand dollars, on a pledge of oil to be left on the island. He mediated between the merchants of Nantucket and New Bedford and urged co-operation upon them, thereby restoring confidence in the oil market, and bringing wealth to both places. He supplied the government for seven years with all the oil used in the lighthouses of the United States, and died in Philadelphia in December, 1871, after a remarkable career, at the age of ninety-two years.

lieving that the inauguration of steam navigation of the right sort would prove of great benefit to the island. Barker, by the way, was indirectly connected with the first steamboat which ever appeared in America, for, in 1806, he imported on consignment to himself by a London house, "for Robert Fulton," the first steam engine ever used in the propulsion of vessels.

There is an interesting story connected with the selection of a name for the steamer which he was having built for Nantucket. Mr. Barker wanted a name which had originality, and day after day he pondered over the problem. One morning when he entered his counting room, where he had several young men employed, he noticed one of them sitting with bowed head, as if in deep thought, with a quill pen poised in his hand. "Good morning, Halleck!" said Mr. Barker. "What are you writing this morning?" "Oh, just a few stanzas, while I was waiting for you to come in," was the reply. "Let me read it and see how it sounds," said his employer. This is what he read:

MARCO BOZZARIS.

At midnight, in his guarded tent,  
The Turk was dreaming of the hour  
When Greece, her knee in suppliance bent,  
Should tremble at his power.

"Good!" exclaimed Merchant Barker. "That is just the name for my little steamer!" And the "Marco Bozzaris" she became. The young man was Fitz-Greene Halleck, who later became a poet of some renown, and was the confidential adviser of John Jacob Astor, and a trustee of the Astor Library. His poem "Marco Bozzaris" was considered his masterpiece, and it was while in Jacob Barker's employ that it was written, and the little 140-tons steamer which came to Nantucket in the spring of 1829 bore the name of "Marco Bozzaris."

Her first trip across the sound was made on the 29th of April, under command of Capt. Edward H. Barker, a Nantucket man and a nephew of "Merchant Barker," and the boat was put on the route between Nantucket and New Bedford. It is recorded that on the first trip which this steamer made into New Bedford harbor, Captain Barker ran her on the rocks, and was so chagrined at the disaster, fearing to incur his uncle's displeasure, that he bound his solitary passenger and each mem-

ber of his crew, under a solemn oath not to mention the incident. Several years afterwards, however, he told the story of the first trip of the "Marco Bozzaris" himself.

As the steamer was originally built, there were some things about her which were not quite satisfactory to the owner, and she was kept on the route but a short time during the year 1829, before it was found necessary to withdraw the boat, in order that some changes might be made in her construction and a larger boiler be put in. She was taken to New York, where the necessary changes were made, and on the 25th of September returned to Nantucket and made frequent trips across the sound until December 6th, when she was withdrawn for the winter. Jacob Barker found little encouragement in his steamboat project among the island's business men, and hesitated about placing the "Marco Bozzaris" in service again, but finally determined to give the scheme another trial, so sent the boat down from New York, and she resumed operations on the 3d of June, 1830.

Much of the pessimism had vanished by this time, however, and the steamer was kept rather busy during the first few weeks of her restoration to the island service. Twice between the 8th and the 15th she made a round trip in a day between New Bedford and Nantucket, the first for the purpose of transporting several hundred passengers over to the island to attend the Quarterly Meeting of the Society of Friends, and the second in connection with the "annual shearing" of that year, which was largely attended from the mainland.

#### THE OLD-TIME SHEARING.

These "shearings" were to the Nantucket people at that period the greatest fete days of the year—far more important than Fourth of July. A century or so ago the island had some ten thousand sheep, which were allowed to roam at will, the ownership being determined through an ingenious system of ear-marks. The annual shearing was always held in June, and the feasts and festivities incident thereto usually lasted four days and were largely attended. Upon the day selected for the fete to commence, the thousands of sheep would be assembled at the shearing pen near Miacomet pond, when the "wash-

ing" would start in with considerable ceremony. It usually took two days to do the washing, and the shearing two days more, so Nantucket's annual festival always consumed the greater part of the week, and the event of the year 1830 was memorable from the fact that the steamer brought 224 persons over from the mainland to enjoy the good times—the forthcoming "Nantucket shearing" having been given considerable prominence on the Vineyard and in New Bedford for several weeks prior to the occasion. The event was "reported" in the *Inquirer* of that week as follows:

"About two miles southwest from town, on a spacious plain, are two large enclosures, called sheep pens, containing each about one hundred and fifty acres. The southern pen is adjoining the water, and in this the sheep are collected from all parts of the island and washed, a few days previous to shearing. They are then removed to the northern pen, in shape something like an isosceles triangle, the eastern part of it terminating in a lane, leading to a number of circular enclosures of different dimensions. Into this western pen the sheep are driven, and, from that, urged, by means of gates and passages, into the circular enclosures, till a convenient number is collected. The owners then select their respective sheep, known by distinctive marks, and convey them to small pens or yards, on the outside of the largest circular pen, and of forms resembling parallelograms, nearly twenty feet in length and from eight to twelve in width. Immediately contiguous to these small pens, forming a kind of exterior village, are the shearing tents. Under these the patient and uncomplaining animals are shorn of their fleeces, and, what seems cruel, after having been deprived of their wool, an annual tribute to their owners, many are also deprived of a part of their tails, and then let loose to range again at large. This practice we charitably suppose is to improve the health of the sheep; but in a few instances the pieces cut off were so liberal that little will be found to abscond next year.

"The present number of sheep on the island is about twelve thousand; and if we suppose the fleeces of wool to average two pounds, and the wool to average two cents per pound, the amount will be six thousand dollars. We understand the price of the wool for a few years past has not much exceeded twenty cents—and it is supposed the new tariff will raise it to twenty-five.

"In addition to the ceremonies, cheer and hospitality connected with those immediately engaged in shearing, there is a large number of tents pitched a little to the northward of the sheepfold, for the special purpose of making pockets lighter and heads and stomachs heavier. In these tents is fancifully arranged a great variety of eatables and drinkables, so that the most fastidious palates and undis-

tinguished guzzles may be accommodated at a moment's warning. And as a kind of piquant to add a higher relish to the whole entertainment, the fiddle bow is drawn merrily for the amusement of the jolly sons of Neptune, and such lasses as may feel disposed, to join the 'mazy dance.' This is performed on a temporary floor, some ten or twelve feet in length, and five or six in width. On this, different feats of activity are performed, and various steps taken, which we are wholly unqualified to name, save the double shuffle and the Nar-raganset back-step.

"The consequences of a Nantucket shearing on the morals of society are probably similar to the effects produced by an annual military muster—though we believe deleterious; for the number of spectators and of those engaged as hucksters is less than at a muster. And whenever deductions are made which effect the moral character of an individual or a community, all the concomitant circumstances must be taken into the estimation. Thus, if a general review of soldiers, or the annual shearing of the sheep upon this island, could be performed like the ordinary pursuits of life, that is, without the appendages which are always attached to such ceremonies, the moral character of many would be less tarnished, and he who will be at the trouble to investigate the subject, will find the fair promise of many hopeful lads is first sullied, and the charming buds of female delicacy are often first blighted on days of public festivity and amusement—and he will also find that the wisdom of riper years, and even gray hairs, are not at all times exempted from the contagion of 'great days.' "

The "Marco Bozzaris" for a while found it impossible to adhere strictly to a "schedule," as her popularity brought a heavy excursion patronage. She made numerous trips with pleasure parties from Nantucket and New Bedford to various points along the coast, one of the most important of which was on the 6th of July, when 210 persons went from New Bedford to the Vineyard on the steamer, accompanied by the Bridge-water band—which was the first trip ever made by "steam" into Edgartown harbor. The next week she took 150 Nantucket persons over to the Vineyard and this was undoubtedly the first "excursion" ever made between the two islands. The fare for the round trip was 75 cents, and an "orchestra" (three violinists) belonging to Nantucket, went along to furnish music.

#### FIRST EXCURSION TO HYANNIS.

What the owners of the "Marco" Bozzaris" considered her most exultant trip was made on the 21st of July, 1830, when, bedecked with flags and carrying 230 persons, she went over

to Hyannis on an excursion, the details of which the Inquirer of that week described as follows:

"The musicians who on this occasion formed a band, made up from part of the Nantucket Band and two or three others who volunteered their services, played in good style as the Marco left the wharf and glided gracefully around Brant point. Soon after, we observed a cotillion party formed, but they had not long tripped it on the light fantastic toe before the heat of the weather and the motion of the boat put a complete interdiction upon that favorite and innocent amusement.

Some of the ladies retreated to the promenade deck to inhale the increasing breeze, and others to their berths to be—seasick. When passing the lightboat stationed on Tucker-nuck shoal, in honor to the little band of watchful mariners who dwell on that lonely and floating castle, the band on board the Marco played them a fine air to cheer their seclusion from the world.

The party arrived at Hyannis about noon and as the Marco entered the harbor, between a breakwater on one side and rocks projecting from the water on the other, the natural inference was that it is a very difficult and dangerous port to enter in thick, tempestuous weather, and at all times hazardous in the night. The tide would not admit of carrying the Marco up to the principal village, a distance of 2 or 3 miles, which was by many regretted. Some of the citizens of Nantucket, not in the habit of seeing stone walls, with which the lots contiguous to the wharf are fenced, exclaimed as we approached the shore—"What extensive wood piles they have!"

About 70 of the party dined on board the Marco, for whose accommodation and comfort an excellent dinner had been provided; and the remainder, excepting a few who rode across to Barnstable to refresh, and possibly a few who strolled on the hills to feast on blackberries, dined with Mr. Marchant, who had prepared a dinner in very fine style.

The small village at Hyannis port contains about a dozen dwelling houses and one store. Two of these buildings, Mr. Marchant's and Mr. Scudder's, are large and elegant; the others, though less, exhibit much neatness and look like the

abodes of contentment and competence. Mr. Marchant was very courteous to the strangers whom he entertained, and we believe every part of his commodious and well furnished house was thrown open on this occasion for the accommodation of the party. Contiguous is a small establishment of salt works, and so powerful were the rays of the sun that we could almost see the salt crystalize. As we had not time to visit the principal village of Hyannis, we must adopt the remark of another—that it is a pleasant place, has a meeting house for Baptists and another erecting for Universalists.

At half past three, the Marco was on her return passage, and as the wind had increased, and consequently the waters in the sound more agitated, seasickness soon became pretty general among the ladies, and some of them were very sick. But we presume none of them will regret it, as their health for a long time will probably be improved. In this case the sweet will follow the bitter.

We noticed nothing remarkable on our homeward voyage, but a monstrous shark that leaped 10 or 15 feet out of the water in a semi-circular curve and plunged again into its native element. It was probably in pursuit of small fish, with which the surface of the water for a considerable extent was literally alive. At a few minutes after sunset, the Marco entered the inner harbor of Nantucket, and after a few circular sweeps, during which time the band entertained the party on board, and the large concourse collected on the wharves to welcome them back, concluding with "Sweet Home," she was safely moored at the wharf.

We cannot conclude this hasty sketch without observing that the Marco Bozzaris is an excellent boat of her tonnage, has an intelligent and attentive captain, a prudent and skillful pilot, a first-rate engineer, a good steward, etc., and the woman attached to the boat appeared to be uncommonly kind and assiduous in her endeavors to anticipate the wants and mitigate the sufferings of the sick. And it gives us pleasure to state that we did not see any kind or ardent spirits drunk during the whole excursion; consequently, there was nothing of that tipification which too frequently occurs in parties so large, and

which is so directly opposed to rational pleasure."

### EXCURSION TO NANTUCKET FROM BOSTON.

The summer of 1830 was surely notable in the annals of Nantucket's steamboat history, for it also chronicled the first excursion ever made to the island from Boston under steam. On Friday, the 2d of July, the steamer "Chancellor Livingston," commanded by one Captain Coggeshall, came to the island with a party of 300 pleasure-seekers from Boston, the trip having been widely advertised as "an ocean voyage to busy Nantucket." The "Chancellor Livingston" drew too much water to pass over the bar, however, so the following morning (Saturday) her captain struck a bargain with Captain Barker of the "Marco Bozzaris," to take his passengers ashore, for which service he was to receive the large sum of \$40. Captain Barker was alleged to have also collected fares from the passengers after they were on board his steamer, at the rate of two shillings a head, so he made a fairly good thing out of the deal.

The excursionists remained at Nantucket all day and at nightfall they again boarded the "Marco Bozzaris" and Captain Barker placed them on the "Chancellor Livingston," which had remained outside the bar while the pleasure seekers were enjoying themselves ashore.

As this was the first excursion party from Boston which ever visited Nantucket under "steam," it is interesting to read the description of the event as printed in the Nantucket Inquirer of July 10, 1830, which follows:

"As the arrival of three hundred persons at this island at one time, and in one vessel, is an occurrence very rare, and perhaps never witnessed before, it seems to be our duty to say something farther on the subject. It was a matter of regret to thousands that the Chancellor Livingston could not pass the bar and visit the inner harbor, and lie a few hours at the wharf, that the curiosity of the citizens generally might be gratified by viewing what, half a century ago, would have astonished the world. This disappointment was partially remedied by the aid of the Marco Bozzaris, Capt. Barker, which brought to town a large portion of the ladies and gentlemen from the Chancellor Livingston. And now we have got them



on shore, we propose to give our readers a sketch of what followed; but before we commence, it is proper to state that in such an assemblage, almost every kind of character can be found, from the accomplished statesman and scientific gentleman, down to the rude wag and the silly fop; and from the sober and intelligent matron down to the flippant and superficial coquette. But as the greater portion of passengers who came ashore from the Chancellor Livingston were of our own sex, this brief sketch will be wholly confined to them.

The day that we received this influx of strangers was one of the hottest we have had this season, and our sandy streets were very dry; consequently, the rush of people to the wharf to welcome the visitors, and the still greater crowd when they marched up town, raised a dust not often witnessed in any place. From the opportunity we had while moving in this mass of various characters, to judge of the different objects they were in pursuit of, we are inclined to divide them into several classes, viz., such as were in search of diversion, pleasure, health, knowledge, etc. Those composing the former class seemed to have a wonderful propensity to ride in horse carts, and one of our waggish car-men, after carting a full load of these sportive gentlemen round town, upon their calling half a dozen more to jump in, contrived, unobserved by his merry passengers, to tip them all up in the street. As they supposed it altogether accidental, the joke passed off well enough. Another party chartered a horse and cart without a driver, choosing to make a charioteer among themselves; but on turning a corner, they were capsized in the sand, en masse, the cart forming a complete summerset and shutting over them like a quailtrap over a flock of blue-jays. Another set, who appeared to come ashore very thirsty, mistook one of our insurance offices for a hotel, and called for punch. The venerable president informed them that he kept policies to sell, and judging from appearances, they would soon need insurance.

The Brigade Band that accompanied the Chancellor Livingston were disappointed in not obtaining the Town Hall to have a concert in; but we believe many of our music-loving

citizens were disappointed more. We were told the band considered the price exorbitant, which, if paid, would have been equivalent to giving a concert. But before the band returned on board the Chancellor Livingston, they played some beautiful airs on the wharf, which were the finest and most delightful specimens of music we ever heard.

About sunset, Capt. Barker received the passengers belonging to the Chancellor Livingston on board the Marco Bozzaris, with about 200 ladies and gentlemen of Nantucket, making in all about 500, and thus deeply laden, left the wharf in handsome style, while the music of the band floated on the cerulean atmosphere, mingling with the zephyrs of the closing day, and infusing into the bosom a pensive but serene delight. The evening was very beautiful and after the embarkation of the passengers attached to the Chancellor Livingston, Capt. Barker made a little excursion in the outer harbor, and returned about 10 o'clock."

#### EXPERIMENT WITH COAL FOR FUEL.

It is to be regretted that there is not a picture of the "Marco Bozzaris" in existence, but the writer has obtained no information which would bear out the belief that a picture of this famous steamer was ever made. The "Marco Bozzaris" was built upon a model similar to that of the "Eagle," but was somewhat larger and considered more powerful. She also possessed twin copper boilers, and burned wood for fuel until the 18th of June, 1831, when it was decided to experiment with coal, the first trip across Nantucket sound with coal for fuel being made on that day.

This coal had been brought to the island in a sloop at the instance of Isaac Austin, and was dumped on the wharf in a small heap, where it was looked upon as a great curiosity. Upon Austin's suggestion, Captain Barker agreed to give the new fuel a trial under the boilers of the "Marco Bozzaris," and ten "barrow-loads" were placed aboard the boat. The steamer did not work well with it, however, for her boilers were made for the use of wood, and she could not be made to keep up steam with coal—much to the chagrin of Austin, who made the trip on the boat that day to witness the experiment. Thereafter

wood was used as long as the steamer remained on the route, and under that fuel she is said to have performed admirably.

The "Bozzaris" docked at the Old South (Swain's) wharf, and until 1832 maintained her weekly trips. In the spring of that year, however, she entered upon a tri-weekly schedule, leaving the island on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and New Bedford on Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The fare was \$2.00 and was collected by the captain on board the boat, who also served in the capacity of purser, and was held responsible for the collection of all freight and passenger money. It used to take the "Marco Bozzaris" about six and a half hours to make the trip from Nantucket to New Bedford.

Like the "Eagle," and "Hamilton," the "Marco Bozzaris" did not actually prove a paying venture, although the island was then almost at the height of its prosperity as a whaling port. There was little passenger travel in those days and the greater part of Nantucket's commerce was carried on by means of sloops or "packets," which frequently made better time between the island and New Bedford than the steamer did, and were accorded the islanders' support. The packet service was also cheaper than "steam," and, in fact, was more reliable the greater part of the time.

## CHAPTER IV.

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The "Marco Bozzaris" ended her Nantucket service in the summer of 1832, when Jacob Barker withdrew her from the route, volunteering his assistance, both personal and financial, towards the formation of a company to control and operate a new and larger steamer to ply between Nantucket island and the mainland. When he saw that the prospects were good, he had the "Marco Bozzaris" taken to New York and sold, the steamer afterwards being in service on the east coast of South America.

### CONSTRUCTION OF THE "TELEGRAPH."

The movement on the part of the Nantucket merchants resulted in the construction of steamer "Telegraph," which made her first trip to Nantucket on the 4th of October, 1832, commanded by the same Capt. Edward H. Barker who ran the "Marco Bozzaris." The new steamer was built especially for the Nantucket service, and was a boat of 171 tons, with a deck length of 120 feet, beam 19 feet six inches, depth of hold, 7 1-2 feet, and paddle-wheels 17 feet in diameter. Like her predecessors, the "Telegraph" had a low pressure engine, with copper boilers, burned wood for fuel, and was coppered and copper fastened throughout, and "with eleven inches of steam could develop sixty horse-power." The Inquirer commented as follows upon the arrival of the boat at Nantucket for the first time:

"The new steamer Telegraph, Capt. Barker, arrived here from New York on Thursday last. She is a beautiful boat and has excellent accommodations. Her model and size are the same as the King Philip's, now running between Fall River and Providence, and she differs from that boat principally in being stronger built, and having finer accommodations. Being intended to ply between this port and New Bedford, she has been constructed expressly with that design. The trial that has been made of her, both in New York and on her

passage hither, is highly satisfactory, proving that in speed and management, as well as comfort (no small matter to a tender stomach) she is not surpassed by any boat of her size. We congratulate the inhabitants of our island and all those whose interest or pleasure calls them this way, on the acquisition of this convenient, safe and pleasant means of conveyance, 'off and on.'

"No expense has been spared to make the Telegraph, in every particular, what is wanted. Her furniture and fixtures exhibit liberality and taste. The ladies' cabin, or, rather, parlor, we venture to prophesy, will bid defiance to sea-sickness in all but the most stormy times. With a skillful pilot, an experienced engineer, the best attendants, a good cook, and over all a gentleman for commander, the success of the boat cannot but be wished, and is not to be doubted."

#### ORGANIZATION OF NANTUCKET STEAMBOAT COMPANY.

Although the "Telegraph" had been constructed and was being operated through the enterprise of Nantucket business men, the historic Nantucket Steamboat Company was not actually organized until after she had been in service several months, the first meeting of the stockholders of the company being held in the Commercial Insurance Office (located in the east end of the present Pacific Club building), on the 4th of February, 1833, at which time it was decided to place the "Telegraph" in service between Nantucket and New Bedford as soon as the harbor should be open to traffic again. It was not until Tuesday, the 12th day of March, however, that the steamer was able to make her way out of the harbor and then she entered upon a tri-weekly schedule, stopping at Holmes Hole en route to and from New Bedford.

The "Telegraph" was referred to as "one of the finest steamers in existence" at the time of her construction (although in 1842 the company placed her valuation at only \$11,000.) As she was still in service during the early 50's there are many persons resident on Nantucket and elsewhere who have vivid recollections of "the old Telegraph," some of whom can recall making trips on the boat when she was running between Nantucket and New Bedford; and can also recall interesting incidents in connection with the operation of the old steamer.

During the first few years of her service it was not deemed expedient to operate the "Telegraph" in the winter



Steamer "Telegraph." Built in 1833. Length 120 feet 6 inches.  
Beam 19 feet 6 inches.



months. She was a new boat and the owners did not care to take any unnecessary risk with her, so from December to March the island was obliged to depend principally on the services of the sloops and packets which were then plying between Nantucket and numerous mainland points. In the winter of 1834-5, however, the "Telegraph" made several trips across the sound, and on the 15th of January went over to West Falmouth after a load of wood. Upon this occasion she nearly met her fate, for on the return trip she ran into a north-east blizzard and groped her way into the harbor at nightfall after a rough experience, with her famous "jib" blown into shreds.

#### A GOOD ICE BREAKER.

Although she was far from a powerful craft, the peculiar model of the "Telegraph" made her an excellent boat for battling the ice, and one old diary says that in 1840 she made a trip from New Bedford and found less than twenty miles of clear water on the passage. Capt. Alden H. Adams, one of Nantucket's nonogenarians, informed the writer that at times, in order for the "Telegraph" to make her way through the ice-fields, the passengers would be requested to "go aft," so that the steamer's bow, which was of very peculiar shape and had a tendency to ride on top of the ice instead of through it, could be run well up on the floe. The passengers would then be called "forward" and by their weight assist the steamer in breaking through the ice. This performance would be repeated many times and by this method the "Telegraph" proved herself an able boat for butting the ice. When the passengers would tire of the monotony which resulted from a long siege in the ice, they used to step out and walk alongside the steamer for some distance, in order to exercise their limbs.

An unique feature of the "Telegraph's" early service was "John," the negro cabin boy, whose duty it was to summon delinquent passengers to the "Captain's Office" to pay their fares. "John" used to have a very modest way with him, which was always "fetching." Armed with a loud-toned dinner bell, he would go from one end of the boat to the other calling forth his summons: "All those on board this boat who have not paid



their fares will please step up to the Captain's Office and do likewise."

"John" was also the possessor of a violin, an instrument which had unusual charms. When the seas were rough and the passage across the sound so uncomfortable as to create seasickness among the passengers, the captain would call "John" from below, seat him in a chair at the entrance to the "saloon," and tell him to "start up his fiddle." It is said that the strains of music, accompanied by the rhythmic beating of the negro's foot, would have a soothing influence over the afflicted passengers and that the qualms of seasickness would vanish. At any rate, "John" and his fiddle served to divert the attention of the woe-begone travellers for several years, and there may be someone still living who, as children, came under the "spell" in those days of long ago.

One particularly interesting item regarding the "Telegraph" is the fact that at one time she was possessed of two names, bearing the title "Nebraska" on each of her paddle-boxes, but still maintaining that of "Telegraph" on her stern. When the steamer was approaching she was the "Nebraska," but after she had passed she was the "Telegraph." This additional honor was given the old boat because of considerable interest manifested in Nantucket in the year 1854 over "the Kansas-Nebraska controversy," and she bore both names as long as she remained in the island service. The steamer was always listed as the "Telegraph" on the Custom House records, the title "Nebraska" being merely a nom de plume.

#### ARRIVAL OF THE "MASSACHUSETTS."

Besides operating the steamer "Telegraph," the Nantucket Steamboat Company owned two sloops, the "Glide" and the "Fenwick," which were used as freight and mail boats between the island and New Bedford, until 1842, when the company decided to have a new and larger steamer built for the route, which the increased business appeared to warrant.

This boat was the "Massachusetts," about twice the tonnage of the "Telegraph" and much better equipped, for she cost \$40,000 (\$39,137.01 to be exact.) The "Massachusetts" still maintained the old style "square" engine, with the peculiar

"A" or "gallows" frame amidships (as will be seen from the illustration) to guide the heavy cross-head, at the ends of which were attached the connecting rods that turned the cranks to the paddle-wheels, the piston-rod being attached to the centre of the cross-head and making with it a letter "T." She was of 308 tons, 161 feet 2 inches long, 23 feet 11 inches beam, with a depth of 8 feet 4 inches, and her first trip was made on July 4, 1842, under command of Capt. Lot Phinney.

Upon this occasion she took 230 of the residents of Nantucket on an excursion to New Bedford and return—which was a gala event for the islanders, as the "Massachusetts" was considered the finest steamer on the New England coast at that period, and her increased size and power over the old "Telegraph" were commented upon quite forcibly by the local press, and the daily papers of Boston and New Bedford freely complimented Nantucket upon her good fortune.

#### LOSS OF SHIP "JOSEPH STARBUCK."

The "Massachusetts" was used as a "fair weather" boat for a few weeks after her arrival on the local route, the directors of the company keeping the "Telegraph" in service until it became absolutely necessary to haul her off for repairs during the fall and winter of 1842-3. One of the first affairs in which the "Massachusetts" figured prominently was in connection with the loss of the ship "Joseph Starbuck" on Nantucket bar, late in November, 1842, in which event the old "Telegraph" also had a hand.

The "Joseph Starbuck" was taken in tow by the "Telegraph" on Sunday morning, November 27, bound for Edgartown, where she was to load with supplies for a whaling voyage. On board were a half dozen ladies, besides the members of the crew, the trip over to the Vineyard being a sort of pleasure cruise, which, however, resulted in disaster and loss of a splendid vessel.

A member of the crew was a Nantucket boy named William M. Eldredge, who was just starting out on his first voyage—a brief but eventful one it proved to be. Sixty-eight years later Captain Eldredge, a gray-haired old salt who has made no less than seventeen voyages "around the Horn," still retains a

clear memory of the events which transpired in his early manhood, and vividly describes the happenings of that Sabbath in 1842 when the good ship "Joseph Starbuck" met her fate on the sands of Nantucket bar. Regarding this disaster, of which he was the last survivor, Captain Eldredge, in March, 1910, gave the following details:

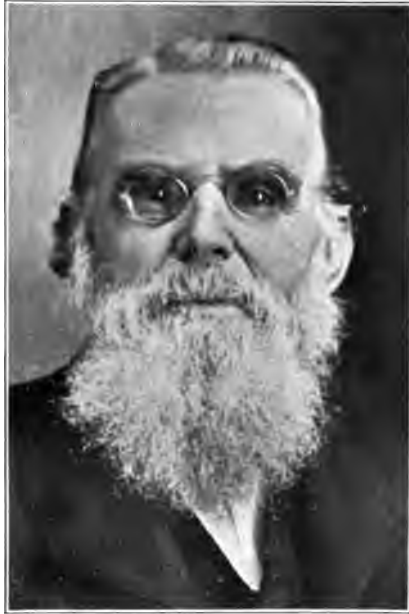
"The ship left Nantucket with a favorable breeze, in tow of steamer Telegraph, but soon after we left the wind shifted to dead ahead and blew so hard that the steamer was unable to make any head-way. Bad weather was coming on fast, so the tow-lines were loosened and the ship brought to an anchor about a mile from the Tuckernuck shoal lightship, the Telegraph hastening back to port, leaving the ship to ride out the gale at best she could. The wind increased to hurricane force, and the vessel being light, she rode so violently that one chain after another parted and she finally broke adrift and was swept before the storm in an easterly direction.

To prevent us being carried out to sea in her then unprepared condition, the mizzen-mast was cut away, the fore-sail set and every effort made to return to port, but so furious was the gale from the northwest that the attempt failed and the ship swept on towards the eastern extremity of Nantucket bar, which all on board knew meant impending disaster.

About midnight, the ship struck on the shoal, and, as she was without much ballast, almost immediately rolled over into the trough of the sea, with the waves breaking over her continually. We experienced a fearful night, but at daybreak, our predicament was seen from the tower at Nantucket and about 9 o'clock in the morning the steamer Massachusetts was on her way to us, although the wind was blowing with undiminished force and the conditions near the bar were extremely hazardous.

The Starbuck was lying on the shoal about four miles from town and two miles from the nearest shore, while the seas were running mountains high for miles around. Notwithstanding the danger, the Massachusetts ploughed her way to our relief and within an hour had made fast to our lee side by a warp, necessarily of considerable length, her engine being kept in motion

Photo by Boyer.



Capt. Willam M. Eldredge.  
Sole survivor of Ship Joseph Starbuck.  
Wrecked on Nantucket bar,  
November 27, 1842.



to hold the line taut. There were thirty-five persons on board, all of whom were taken off by a single whale-boat, which made five perilous trips between the ship and the steamer.

The weather was fearfully cold at the time and the decks and rigging of the ship were coated with ice, making a somewhat ghostly picture as she lay there on the bar, sheathed in white. The Starbuck finally broke up, nothing of material value being saved."

The passenger travel between Nantucket and the mainland increased 15 per cent. the first year the "Massachusetts" was in service, the boat affording quicker and better accommodations than the old "Telegraph." In November, 1843, the "Massachusetts" commenced making stops at Edgartown on her way to and from New Bedford, but this move was not considered a wise one and the idea was abandoned after a few weeks' trial. The "Telegraph" was thoroughly overhauled that winter and it was then decided to have both steamers in service, and for a time the "Massachusetts" ran to New Bedford and the "Telegraph" to Woods Hole, but this proved to be a losing venture, which was promptly "sat upon" by the stockholders at the next meeting of the company. From this time forth, the Nantucket Steamboat Company met adversity after adversity. The construction and maintenance of a second steamer was more than the island business warranted, and the company never got "on its feet again," although it continued to exist another decade (further details of which well be told later.)

As a stroke of economy, in 1843, the company also placed in service the sloop "Portugal," at a cost of \$2,300, to which vessel was awarded a portion of the mail contract, which the company secured with the government for \$3,000 per year. By having the "Portugal" in service, the company could send its steamers out "wrecking," when occasions arose. The dividend books show that in September of 1843, the company declared a dividend of \$5,030 on 2,012 shares, which was the eleventh dividend declared since the company was organized in 1833. From that time forth the dividends began to grow less each year—an evidence that the company was on an insecure financial footing.

## CHAPTER V.

## WRECKING OPERATIONS OF THE OLD STEAMERS.

From the time the "Telegraph" went into service in 1833, until the "Island Home" was supplanted by the more modern steamboats fifty-three years later, the greater portion of the revenue derived from the island steamers was in towing and wrecking, which were the sources of great profit to the owners of the boats at times, compared with the small income from passenger travel and freight in those days. In the records of the Steamboat Company frequently appear items showing the large sums of money received for towage and salvage (one of the largest of which was in connection with the ship "Louis Philippe" in 1847) and it was a common occurrence for the stockholders at the annual meeting of the company, to bestow upon the captain one or two hundred dollars in addition to his salary, because through the captain's efforts in going to wrecks, the company's business had been made more profitable during the year. "Steamboating" on Nantucket was carried on vastly differently in those days than at present, for the island boats were about all the "steam" seen in Nantucket sound during the 40's and 50's, and the steamers would go a long distance after a disabled vessel. The Old South wharf was the landing place of the steamers prior to 1850, and a busy scene was always presented thereabouts when the boats reached port.

## STRANDING OF THE "LOUIS PHILIPPE."

Probably the most remunerative wrecking operation in which the Nantucket steamers "Telegraph" and "Massachusetts" had a hand, was in connection with the stranding of the New York-Havre packet "Louis Philippe," above referred to, a short distance from shore about one and a half miles west of

Tom Nevers Head, on December 17, 1847. The vessel sailed from Havre on November 8th, for New York, with a cargo valued at \$200,000, and first struck on Great Round shoal, losing her rudder, afterwards floating and again striking on Pochick rip, to be again swept ashore west of Tom Nevers. The steamer "Massachusetts" was sent out to the disabled craft, but the weather shutting in thick, she did not locate her and returned to port. Later in the day, the "Telegraph" was sent out and arrived alongside the "Louis Philippe" at 6.30 in the evening, remaining by her all night. The following morning the "Massachusetts" was again ordered out, and the two steamers stayed by the vessel until Sunday morning, when the wreckers got her pumps to working, so that the steamers could take her in tow.

The weather conditions were bad, and after parting their hawsers five times, the "Telegraph" and "Massachusetts" were obliged to leave the vessel at anchor and run to port for their own safety. They towed her to a point off Nobadeer, and left her with two heavy anchors down, so that she could ride out the gale safely, about twenty of the Nantucket men remaining aboard the vessel to help the crew keep her free of water. The vessel had 167 passengers on board, and forty of them were brought to Nantucket on the "Massachusetts," the remainder deciding to remain aboard the vessel.

Capt. William B. Coffin made a new rudder for the disabled craft, and on Monday, three days after the "Louis Philippe" stranded, the two steamers went out and placed the jury-rudder in position, taking the vessel in tow again, and reaching Edgartown with her late in the evening, towing her out around Muskeget, thus bringing her to port safely after four days of rather trying experiences. The risk which the Nantucket Steamboat Company took in sending its two steamers out among the treacherous shoals in the effort to save the "Louis Philippe" was given due consideration by the Board of Underwriters, and the sum of \$31,000 was awarded the men who saved the vessel, distributed as follows:

Capt. David G. Patterson, pilot of the ship, received \$500 in addition to his fee of \$150 for taking the vessel to New York.



Capt. John J. Gardner received \$300, Capt. William B. Coffin a like sum, and eighteen men who worked on the ship received a total of \$2,100. The sum of \$5,000 was awarded the crews of steamers "Telegraph" and "Massachusetts," who selected Captains George Myrick, George Harris and Job Coleman to make division of this sum among the men. To Captain Phinney of the "Massachusetts," and to Captain Barker of the "Telegraph," \$325 each; to Engineer Lighthall of the "Massachusetts," \$244; to Engineer Hart of the "Telegraph," \$184.16; to Mr. Crocker, who served part of the time as engineer of the "Telegraph," \$59.84; to Capt. Walter Allen, pilot of the "Telegraph," \$256; to Capt. William Patterson, pilot of the "Massachusetts," \$249; to Mrs. Tremble, stewardess on the "Massachusetts," \$100; to Charles H. Farnham, boy on the "Massachusetts," \$95; and to the crews of both steamers at the rate of \$2.00 per hour each for their services. The greatest length of time any one man served was seventy-nine hours. The referees who made this distribution were chosen by the men themselves—hence there was perfect satisfaction at the result. This feat of saving the "Louis Philippe" was undoubtedly the most profitable wrecking operation ever engaged in by any of the Nantucket steamers.



The old steamers "Bradford Durfee" and "Canonicus" lying at a wharf in Fall River. The "Bradford Durfee" was the steamer which brought relief to Nantucket at the time of the fire in 1846. Reproduced from a rare photograph in the possession of Elisha T. Jenks of Middleboro.



## CHAPTER VI.

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In 1848 the rate for a passage from Nantucket to New Bedford was "\$2.00 a trip, meals extra," the equipment of the "Massachusetts" affording fairly good cuisine service. A sign was for several years posted in the saloon, reading as follows: "Passengers desiring dinner will please notify the clerk soon after leaving the wharf, so as to give the steward time to make the necessary arrangements." This sign is said to have been hung up in one of the buildings on Steamboat wharf as a "souvenir" for a number of years after the "Massachusetts" left Nantucket.

### EXPERIENCES OF THE "TELEGRAPH" AND "MASSACHUSETTS."

Both the "Telegraph" and "Massachusetts" had many exciting and dangerous experiences in battling with the elements while crossing Nantucket sound on the route between the island and New Bedford, but neither boat ever met with any really serious accident. On the 11th of August, 1852, it is recorded that the "Massachusetts" started forth for New Bedford in the teeth of a heavy northeast gale, and when about ten miles out, the steam pipe leading from the boiler to the cylinder, broke, necessitating the boat coming to an anchor in the sound. Late in the morning her plight was discovered by someone who chanced to climb up in the tower, and as soon as possible steam was gotten up on the "Telegraph," which was despatched to the assistance of her sister vessel with all possible speed. When the "Telegraph" reached the scene of disaster, the waves were running high and the "Massachusetts" was tugging at her anchor and tossing about fearfully. The conditions were so rough that the little "Telegraph" was obliged to hasten to port for her own safety, leaving the "Massachusetts" to weather the gale as best she could.

Captain Barker was in charge of the "Massachusetts" at the time, and Capt. Thomas Brown was in command of the "Telegraph." Both realized the dangerous position of the "Massachusetts," and both knew that it was useless for one steamer to endeavor to aid the other, with such a fierce north-easter blowing—said to be the worst summer storm known by either captain. The engineer on the "Massachusetts" worked incessantly in an effort to make temporary repairs to the broken pipe, but it was not until the following morning that he dared put a pound of steam on the boilers, and at ten o'clock on the 12th the "Massachusetts" limped into Nantucket harbor, having been anchored out in the sound twenty-seven hours, unable to help herself or to receive aid from the "Telegraph." It is recorded that upon this occasion, when the steamer was tied up to the wharf, a crowd of enthusiastic townspeople took Captain Barker on their shoulders and carried him to his home with considerable ceremony.

Upon another occasion, the "Massachusetts" steamed forth from Nantucket and when off Tuckernuck shoal broke her main shaft, and had to return to port with only one paddle-wheel in operation. The same afternoon the "Telegraph" started out for New Bedford, when some part of her machinery broke, and she also was obliged to return to port. It took two days for the island blacksmiths to make temporary repairs to the two steamers, but finally the broken parts were patched up so that they could cross the sound, and at day-light, three mornings after the dual-mishap, the "Massachusetts" steamed slowly away towards Providence and the "Telegraph" towards New Bedford, at which places complete repairs were made, and a week later the "Telegraph" was again ready for service. In the meantime, the Nantucket people were without steamboat connection with the continent, and were obliged to depend upon the services of the packets.

It is recorded that on the 23d of October, 1848, the "Massachusetts" abandoned her regular schedule between Nantucket and New Bedford and took a party of the islanders to Boston for a week's outing, that they might witness the "water celebration," an event of great importance to Boston and New





Steamer "Massachusetts." Built in 1842. Length 161 feet 2 inches.  
Beam 13 feet 11 inches.

England at that time, for it was to commemorate the inauguration of public water service for the city for the first time, a system having been laid from Lake Cochituate at a cost of over three millions of dollars. Many of the leading business men of Nantucket went on this excursion, as well as the town officers, and in order that the editor of the local paper might attend, publication was deferred that week, a "full account" of the celebration appearing in the next issue. Nantucket was a much more prosperous town in those days, yet the management of the steamboat company thought nothing of taking the steamer from the route for days at a time, whereas nowadays such a thing would not be tolerated. A half century has brought lots of changes to Nantucket in the way of steamboat service.

#### IN THE HOTEL BUSINESS.

It is interesting to note that at one time the Nantucket Steamboat Company engaged in the hotel business as a side issue and purchased the Jared Coffin house (now the Ocean House property) which it subsequently sold (in 1857) for \$5,500, having held the property about ten years and expending a large amount of money in making improvements thereto, the property being disposed of because the stockholders thought the hotel a losing venture in conjunction with the steamboat business. At that period, the hotel was a "forty-room house with accommodations for twelve horses in the stable," and, by vote of the stockholders, was conducted as a "strictly temperance place."

Some of the votes recorded in the books of the Nantucket Steamboat Company since 1846 (all that are available) reveal some very interesting deliberations by the stockholders. On the first page of the "record from 1846 to 1859," in the handwriting of the late Andrew J. Morton, appears the following entry:

On the 13th of July, 1846, the record of the stockholders' meetings of the Nantucket Steamboat Company was consumed, together with sundry other papers belonging to the company, in the memorable conflagration of that day.

A. J. Morton, Sec'y.

Believing some of the votes passed by the stockholders at the meetings of the company will be of interest in connection with this article, the writer has taken the liberty of copying



them from the records and presents a few of the "votes" herewith:

At a meeting of the stockholders held in the vestry of the Second Congregational church, July 27, 1846, a committee was appointed to inquire into the expediency of purchasing Jared Coffin's house for a public house, ascertaining the price of the same.

At a meeting held two weeks later, the committee was authorized to purchase the property at a price not to exceed seven thousand dollars. The committee was instructed to lease said house to some suitable person, upon such terms as they may think proper, with the understanding that the sale of intoxicating liquors on the property should be strictly prohibited.

February 7, 1848—Voted to present Captains Lot Phinney and James H. Barker two hundred dollars each additional compensation for extra services rendered in the case of ship *Louis Philippe*.

February 21, 1848—Isaac Austin offered following preamble and resolution:

"Forasmuch as the steamboats *Telegraph* and *Massachusetts* have failed to pay their expenses, the cost of running the boats and the fair price of interest and insurance, but have sunk more than 8 per cent. per annum for all the time they have run since 1832, therefore

"Resolved, that the stockholders ought not to be called on to give presents to their captains, whom they have paid well for their services, but that the four hundred dollars voted to them ought a large part of it to have been given (if given away at all) to Captain Luce and crew who were carrying the mails for the steamboat captains, which they were receiving the pay for, and earning their proportion of the \$5,000 besides."

By separate votes, the preamble and resolution were laid on the table (where they still remain, it is presumed).

Voted, to present Captain Luce one hundred dollars for his indefatigable services the last year.

May 1, 1848—A petition from 147 citizens of Edgartown was received requesting that the steamer *Massachusetts* might touch at Edgartown on her trips to and from New Bedford. The stockholders first voted favorably on the petition and then rescinded their vote three weeks later.

February 6, 1849—Voted, that the directors be authorized to exchange the sloop *Portugal* for a suitable vessel for doing the business of this company, provided they succeed in obtaining the contract for carrying the mails.

February 17, 1851—Voted to give Captain Barker a salary of nine hundred dollars for running the boat the coming year.

February 21, 1851—Voted, that the resident ministers have the liberty to purchase either kind of tickets, which shall include their whole family, and that any minister coming to fill their places at any

time, these same tickets shall include the wife only with the transient minister.

At the annual meeting held February 6, 1854, the matter of running steamer Massachusetts between Nantucket and Hyannis was discussed; also the building of a new boat.

### OPENING OF THE HYANNIS ROUTE.

When the project of continuing the railroad down the Cape to Hyannis was announced in 1854, the Nantucket Steamboat Company, under the impression that Hyannis would prove a much more desirable terminus for the island route than New Bedford, with a shorter water passage and better connections with Boston, decided to run the "Massachusetts" to and from that place, abandoning the New Bedford line, and to use the "Telegraph" as a spare boat, but events transpired which upset the company's plans considerably.

On the 22d of September, 1854, the "Massachusetts" was sent over to Mattapoisett to take in tow the ship Splendid, for Edgartown. At that time, the steamer was in command of Capt. B. C. Chase, and unfortunately ran onto a ledge of rocks while under full steam, knocking two or three holes in her bottom and compelling her to return to New Bedford for repairs. This accident put a serious block in the way of the proposed Nantucket-Hyannis route, for it meant that the "Telegraph" would have to be relied upon until the "Massachusetts" was again ready for service.

The first trip over the new route was made on September 26, and for two weeks the "Nebraska" (as the "Telegraph" was better known at the time), covered the Nantucket-Hyannis service. The old boat was slow and not well-fitted for the route, and this fact doubtless caused the company to bring the "Massachusetts" into service before repairs were fully completed, for after running between the 14th and 19th of October, it was found necessary to haul the steamer off again, and it was not until the 15th of November that she was thoroughly repaired and able to replace the "Nebraska", under command of Capt. Thomas Brown.

## CHAPTER VII.

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For a time this change of the terminus of the island route from New Bedford to Hyannis had every indication of being a wise move, but the removal of the New Bedford connection caused the "Martha's Vineyard Steamboat Company" (which had been organized in 1851 to handle the Vineyard traffic), to consider entering into opposition with the Nantucket company and to extend its line to Nantucket. This action resulted in the formation of the "New Bedford, Vineyard & Nantucket Steamboat Company," incorporated under an act of the legislature of 1854, which was organized for the expressed purpose of building a steamer for the route between New Bedford and Nantucket, which the Nantucket company had abandoned for the Hyannis route.

### OPPOSITION STEAMBOAT LINES.

This brought two opposition lines for Nantucket, and as there appeared to be danger of the new company diverting a portion of the Vineyard traffic, considerable indignation was aroused in Edgartown during the first few months following the announcement. The Gazette quite bitterly condemned the project, in August, 1854, commenting editorially as follows:

"We would inform our Nantucket friends that this attempt of theirs to divide the Vineyard, especially the Edgartown, travel, will not succeed. Their boat is not wanted here and will not be patronized. In saying thus much, we but feebly echo the public voice. We should be surprised, indeed, to know that a single Edgartonian would take passage on the Nantucket boat. Sure we are, no well wisher of our town will have aught to do with her. Our people know full well that the object of our Nantucket friends is to divide the travel, cause the withdrawal of the boat built expressly for our accommodation, and then leave us to whistle over deserted hopes."

The wrath of the Vineyarders was apparently misdirected, for only a small amount of Nantucket capital was invested in

the "New Bedford, Vineyard & Nantucket Steamboat Company," about all the stock being owned by New Bedford parties, who did not relish the action of the old Nantucket Company in abandoning New Bedford as a terminus.

Some delay was met with in the construction of the new steamer for the New Bedford-Nantucket route, so the company chartered steamer \*"George Law" for the service until the new boat was ready. Capt. James Barker of Nantucket was placed in command of the chartered boat, which made her first trip to the island on Saturday, September 30, commencing a regular schedule between the island and New Bedford on October 2d, making three round trips a week.

#### SERVICE OF THE "EAGLE'S WING."

The new steamer which was under construction was named the "Eagle's Wing," that being selected instead of "Young America," as at first announced. She was ready for service October 10th, and Captain Barker was sent to New York to bring her down, Captain Brown running the "George Law" in the meantime. The "Eagle's Wing" made the trip from New York to New Bedford in 13 1-2 hours, including two stops, and arrived at Nantucket for the first time on Saturday, October 21st, 1854, commencing her regular trips the following week, in command of Captain Barker, with Amasa Whitaker engineer. She was of more modern design than either of the other boats which had been running to Nantucket, possessed a "walking-beam" instead of the old style "A-frame," and was fitted up in quite an elaborate manner for boats of that period. The "Eagle's Wing" was of 439 tons, 173 feet long, 27 feet beam, and was more like the present-day steamers than either of the other boats.

On her first trip from Nantucket to New Bedford (Monday, October 23, 1854,) the "Eagle's Wing" met with an accident in

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\*The steamer "George Law" was built in New York in 1852, by Thomas Collier. She was 151 feet long, 22½ feet beam, and of 240-gross tons, and ran between New Bedford and Nantucket under charter from September to November, 1854, until the "Eagle's Wing" was in commission. On account of a slight accident to the "Eagle's Wing" early in December of that year, the "George Law" ran on the Nantucket route again for four days, while repairs were being made.

running up to her berth. The wires connected with the engineer's signal bell broke just before she reached the dock, so the captain's signal to "reverse" did not reach the engineer, and the steamer shot ahead and ran against the "Canonicus," which was lying at the next wharf, carrying away the latter's false stem and then striking the ship Isaac Howland which was lying nearby. The "Eagle's Wing" sustained slight injuries to her own bow, but none of the damage created by the mishap was of a serious nature. She had on board over three hundred passengers from Nantucket and the Vineyard, the first passage from the islands on the new steamer being a "free trip."

The steamer was equipped with a fine dining saloon, capable of accommodating eighty passengers, and the cuisine service was excellent, a very satisfactory dinner being secured on board for fifty cents. The ladies' saloon contained two state-rooms and fourteen berths, and the interior decorations of the boat were somewhat elaborate in every way.

One unique feature about the "Eagle's Wing," which attracted considerable attention and a large amount of comment among those who travelled on the boat, was a mis-placed apostrophe in the sign over the saloon door-way, which read "Ladie's Cabin," and no amount of persuasion and argument could convince the owners of the boat that it was incorrect, and the apostrophe continued to remain before the "s" as long as the boat was in existence. Captain Barker used to say that the man who made the sign must have known what he was about; he himself, not being a lady, did not care where the apostrophe was, and he would never sanction it being placed in proper position, so there it remained.

Captain Barker continued in command of the "Eagle's Wing" until the spring of 1855, and then resigned to take

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\*The steamer "Canonicus" was built at New York in 1849, was of 540 tons, with one deck and no masts. Her length was 178 feet, beam 28 feet, and depth of hold nine feet. She made occasional trips to Nantucket, although never in regular service on that route, and was sold to the U. S. Quartermaster's Department in 1863. In 1867 she returned to the passenger service, and was burned in June, 1894. The greater part of her service was in Narragansett and Buzzards Bays and Vineyard sound.

Photo by Boyer.



Charles H. Davis, who served on the  
"Eagle's Wing."



charge of a new steamer called the "Plymouth Rock," to run on the Great Lakes between Buffalo and Detroit. When Captain Barker severed his connection with the island steamers, the people of Nantucket, as a mark of their esteem, presented him with a handsome gold watch, which bore on its case this inscription:

"Presented by the citizens of Nantucket to Capt. James H. Barker, as a mark of respect and a token of their appreciation of his urbane manners and gentlemanly deportment in the discharge of his duties for many years as a steamboat master between Nantucket and New Bedford. 1855."

Upon the resignation of Captain Barker, the "Eagle's Wing" was placed under the command of Capt. Benjamin Coffin Cromwell of Holmes Hole, but the charm which brought the "Eagle's Wing" into existence commenced to vanish with the departure of her favorite commander, and it was soon apparent that the Hyannis-Nantucket route was to be the more popular one, and as the island people gave the greater part of their patronage in that direction, the "Eagle's Wing" was soon running at a loss. She continued in service on the Nantucket route less than two years, with Capt. Thomas Brown in command for a time, and was then operated between New Bedford and Edgartown. She ended her existence in 1861 on the Providence river, when she caught fire off what is known as Pawtuxet, while engaged in a friendly race with the steamer "Perry" of the Newport line, on a trip from New Bedford to Providence for an excursion charter, being totally destroyed by the flames.\*

At Nantucket, the "Eagle's Wing" had her berth on the south side of Commercial wharf, and at the same period the "Telegraph" and "Massachusetts" were docked at the New North (the present Steamboat) wharf, the "Telegraph" occupying a berth in the slip in front of where Adams' building now stands.

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\*It is something of a coincidence that Charles B. Smith, who was one of the four survivors of the crew of steamer "Lexington," when she was burned in 1840, was the engineer of the "Eagle's Wing" when she also was destroyed by fire twenty-one years later.



Although a picture of the "Eagle's Wing" cannot be found in existence, it is interesting to note that a relic of the old steamer is now in the possession of the Nantucket Historical Society, in its rooms on Fair Street. This is an eagle which was shot near Westport, and after it was stuffed was placed in a glass case and presented to Captain Barker. For several years it graced the landing at the head of the saloon stair-way on the "Eagle's Wing," and it was looked upon as a great curiosity by the passengers who traveled back and forth on the boat, and was highly prized by Captain Barker.

In compiling this record of the island steamers, the writer endeavored to find some person still living who served on the old steamers "Telegraph" and "Massachusetts," but was unable to locate a single survivor of the men who comprised the crew of either vessel. There is, however, still residing on Nantucket, a man who served as purser and express messenger on the "Eagle's Wing" when she was on the route between the island and New Bedford. This man is Charles H. Davis, the proprietor of the little hardware shop on Federal street, who is probably the only man now living who ran as an officer on this old steamer when she was in the island service. Mr. Davis has vivid recollections of the "Eagle's Wing" and the men who made up her crew, and although after serving on her as a young man in his twenties, he was employed as express agent for forty-one years on the New York steamers, he still bears fresh in mind many incidents connected with the operation of the old boat.

#### CONSOLIDATION OF THE RIVAL COMPANIES.

The original Nantucket Steamboat Company continued its existence until 1855, operating the "Massachusetts" between Nantucket and Hyannis, but in August of that year a consolidation was effected with the "Nantucket & Cape Cod Steamboat Company," which had been formed by the joint efforts of Nantucket and Hyannis capitalists and was having built for this route the new steamer "Island Home." The financial struggles of the old steamboat company ended when it merged into the "Nantucket & Cape Cod Steamboat Company" after an existence of twenty-two years.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### LAYING THE CABLE.

Another event in which the old steamer "Telegraph" figured was in connection with the laying of the sub-marine cable between Great Point, Nantucket, and Monomoy Point, Cape Cod—on August 19, 1856. Although this was not the first cable laid to Nantucket, a line having been run to the island in 1840, by way of Woods Hole, Marthas Vineyard and Tuckernuck, it was an important event for the island, as the cable to be laid that day was heralded as the "the longest American sub-marine cable ever laid."

It appears that the cable laid early in the year 1840 had not proved a success, for it broke two months after communication was established, and the only really important message received over it was when it gave the news of the burning of steamer \*"Lexington" on the night of January 13, 1840, a disaster which resulted in the loss of 140 lives. The 1840 cable touched Nantucket at a point on the cliff, where a station was maintained for a few months that year, and after the cable broke, the operators resorted to the use of carrier pigeons,

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\*The disaster to steamer Lexington was one of the most heart-rending that ever occurred along the Atlantic coast. The boat was proceeding through Long Island sound, with a large number of passengers on board, and was found to be on fire about seven o'clock Monday evening, January 13th. The captain immediately headed for land, but the steamer soon became unmanageable, so he ordered the life-boats lowered. These were so crowded that they probably swamped, for none of them reached shore, and only four persons were saved out of all those on board the steamer. One of the four was David Crowley, the second mate of the "Lexington," (father of C. H. Crowley of Nantucket), who, after drifting about fifty miles on a bale of cotton, reached shore in an exhausted condition, being in the water forty-eight hours.

which would be sent over on the steamer, and liberated when she reached Woods Hole, bringing news to the island several hours in advance of the mails.

As the years rolled by, it became apparent that Nantucket was in urgent need of some rapid and certain means of communication with the continent, and when it was announced, sixteen years after the operation of this first cable, that a new line was to be laid across the sound over an entirely different route, there was quite naturally considerable enthusiasm among the islanders over the project. The promoters felt confident of success in their undertaking, endeavoring to profit by the mistakes made by their predecessors in 1840, and by the improvements in telegraphy and cable construction which had been made during the intervening years.

The new cable was manufactured by Samuel C. Bishop, of New York city, who superintended the laying of the line. It was of No. 9 wire, covered with two coatings of gutta percha, and was about 5-8 of an inch thick. The cable was brought to Nantucket direct from New York, and was placed on board the schooner *Silas Parker* in reels, each reel containing a mile in length. On the deck of the schooner, abaft the main cabin gang-way, a huge reel was fixed in a most substantial manner, platforms being built outside the bulwarks, whereon the men stood who turned the cranks which wound the cable—a dozen men being necessary for this work. The cable was transferred to this reel on the schooner while she lay at the dock, each mile being properly joined as the winding progressed, the task requiring four days.

At 3 o'clock in the morning on August 19th, the steamer "Telegraph" took the schooner in tow, firing a signal gun as she rounded Brant point, to let the inhabitants of the town know that the actual laying of the cable was to be started. At 5.30 o'clock the "Telegraph" brought the schooner to anchor off Great point, fired a second gun, run up the American flag, and one from the schooner's mast-head on which was inscribed the words: "Nantucket Telegraph—the Longest American Sub-Marine Cable ever laid—August, 1856." Preparations for laying the cable went forward rapidly and at 8 o'clock one end

of the wire was taken ashore in a boat and in half an hour connection was made with the land line, when the cannon again burst forth its exultation, followed by cheers on board and on shore.

A few minutes before 9 o'clock, the "Telegraph" started with her tow over the proposed route of the cable, which was run out from the schooner's stern over a roller fixed on the davits. It required the whole force to unwind the cable fast enough for the steamer to make any head-way, and for a time her engines were stopped, the tide taking the outfit along as rapidly as necessary—at the rate of two miles an hour. The "log" kept upon that occasion shows that at 10 o'clock the "Telegraph" had made about 2 1-2 miles, the cable fairly "bottomed." At 11 o'clock, five miles from Great point, the cable was un-reeling itself and the work progressing finely, with 10 1-2 fathoms of water. About noon a heavy swell set in and work became more difficult. When the outfit passed the Shovelful lightship, the crew of the beacon ran up flags, rang the bell and cheered, and the "Telegraph's" gun again pealed forth. At 1.30 in the afternoon the steamer anchored off Monomoy point and fired a signal gun—less than five hours after she left Great point.

Owing to a slight dragging of the anchor, while a sufficient amount of the cable was being stowed into a boat to be taken ashore, the wire became tangled and it was nearly an hour before the end was placed on the beach. At 3.05 o'clock, however, the end was joined to the land wire at Monomoy, and thus having connected Nantucket and America together, the "Telegraph" gave a few joyous toots with her whistle and started with her tow for Nantucket. To Nathan Manter, at that time mate of steamer "Island Home," the credit for the laying of the cable without mishap belonged. Manter was given command of the "Telegraph" upon this important occasion, he being considered an authority on the shoals, tides, etc., and the Inquirer of that week thus compliments him for his excellent work:

"It is but simple justice to say that Nathan Manter, mate of steamer Island Home, who had charge of the steamer Telegraph on the occasion of the laying of the cable, discharged his onerous duties in the most efficient manner. Without competent help, he was

obliged to act in various capacities, frequently executing his own orders, to be sure of promptness, the crew not being familiar with steamboating. He is a cool, active and efficient officer, and showed that he had well improved his opportunities to acquire a practical knowledge of the management of a steamboat."

From Monomoy point (the terminus of the Nantucket cable) to Chatham light, a distance of six miles, the line ran over a land wire. At the latter point, however, another cable 1 1-2 miles in length had previously been laid, connecting Monomoy point with the main land on the Cape—thence running over a course of 2 1-2 miles to the telegraph office in Chatham.

Like the one laid in 1840, this cable never worked very satisfactorily, and the project proved a complete failure, the cable being subsequently taken up and laid from Madaket to Tucker-nuck and thence across to Marthas Vineyard. This second attempt was as unsuccessful as the first, for but a single message was received over it—telling the arrival of a ship at Edgartown—and this message was received by the late Henry Sidney Valentine. At this time the telegraph office was located in the northeast corner of the brick building on the corner of Main and Orange streets (now known as the Folger Block), in the room now occupied as an office by the Gas and Electric company, and up to a few years ago the bracket to which the wire was fastened remained in place high on the front of the building, as well as a similar bracket on the corner of the Pacific Bank building, to which the wire ran on its way up Liberty Street. It is a coincident fact that, fifty-odd years later, the present telegraph office is located in the same building (although not in the same room) where this single message was received over the old cable.\*

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\*Nantucket did not get into practicable and satisfactory cable communication with the continent until 1886, when the government laid the present cable across Vineyard and Nantucket sounds.



Capt. Thomas Brown, First Commander of  
Steamer "Island Home."



## CHAPTER IX.

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The steamer "Massachusetts" ran on the Nantucket route until the "Island Home" was ready for service, and made her last trip to and from Hyannis on the 5th of September, the "Island Home" making her first trip the following day—September 6, 1855. The arrival of this new steamer at Nantucket was a gala event for the islanders—a day which was noted for the large number of boys who "played hookey" from school, that they might miss none of the excitement incident to the occasion. The 5th of September, 1855, was certainly a great day for Nantucket in the steamboat line, three large boats arriving at the island wharves between 9 a. m. and 3 p. m.—the "Island Home," Capt. Thomas Brown, from New York; the "Massachusetts," Capt. A. B. Robinson, from Hyannis; and the "Eagle's Wing," Capt. Benjamin C. Cromwell, from New Bedford.

### ARRIVAL OF STEAMER "ISLAND HOME."

The "Island Home" made the trip from New York to Nantucket under command of the same Capt. Thomas Brown who had previously served at the helms of the "Eagle's Wing" and "Massachusetts," and made the passage in 16 hours and 40 minutes, under an average of 27 pounds of steam, her engineer being John M. Thomas. The "Island Home" was said to be the finest steamer of her size that had been launched at New York up to that time. The builders had their own price, for "nobody beat them down a farthing." All that was asked of them was to build a boat that would cross Nantucket sound with safety in a heavy gale, and this they did, for the steamer proved to be even more than her builders claimed.

The boat was 184 feet long, with a keel length of 181 feet. Her beam was 29 feet 8 inches and her tonnage 536. Her machinery was manufactured at the Morgan Iron Works in New York, and Leonard Merritt, then superintending engineer of



the New Haven Steamboat Company, superintended the construction and installation of it. The arrival of this famous boat at Nantucket on that September morning was described in the local press in the following terms:

"In no spot in this country are the means of transportation of such material interest as to the island of Nantucket. Without the possibility of stage or railroad communication, the character of our 'water carriage' is of vital importance. A new route has lately been opened, the interests of our town are closely blended in the railroad connection which affords us a regular, safe and expeditious daily communication, and therefore it became incumbent to have a steamboat of capacity and fitness to buffet the waves and weather the storms, while at the same time affording the required comforts of a first class passenger boat.

"Such a steamboat reached our wharves yesterday morning, and, very naturally, our citizens generally rejoice at the consummation of their wishes. Her name is the 'Island Home,' and we feel sure she will always prove a home to the voyager returning after escaping the perils of the sea, as well as to the dusty and weary-worn traveller who seeks comfort in our midst. In our mind, the name is peculiarly appropriate, for in no part of the world are the comforts and proprieties of home more strongly appreciated than by the citizens of Nantucket; their heart strings ever vibrate at the thought of our little island, and their eyes wistfully turn hitherward, while away on the briny deep, or pursuing vocations elsewhere.

"At 20 minutes past 9 o'clock, the 'Island Home' glided into our harbor in beautiful style, and a fine appearance she made, with her flags flying, gracefully skimming over the unruffled water, the bright sun smiling a kindly welcome, and the cannon roaring out its friendly greetings, which were as loudly belched forth on board the boat. She circled round the harbor twice, affording the numerous spectators an excellent opportunity to view her graceful proportions, her swan-like movements, and the very limited space occupied in turning around. In appearance and actions, we have nautical indorsement for saying that she is all that could be desired, hardly rippling the water at her

bow as she sped along. As she neared the wharf, the National Brass Band of Boston, which kindly volunteered its services, and occupied the end of the wharf, played several national airs, during which the boat entered her berth. The weather was beautiful; no accident, blunder or anything occurred to mar the pleasure of the occasion.

"Quite a number of gentlemen came as passengers in the Island Home, and they all speak in glowing terms of her good qualities, the calm and beautiful weather adding materially to the pleasantness of the trip. They express themselves particularly indebted to E. W. Perry, Esq., president of the Steamboat Co., for his hospitable treatment, and also to the captain and those under his charge. The members of the New York Press were invited to visit Nantucket in her, but owing to the necessarily short notice, could not avail themselves of the invitation.

"This community has reason to be satisfied in the highest degree with the exertions of those who have been foremost in getting up this splendid and able steamer, by laboring night and day and putting their own money by the thousands into the scheme. Among the very foremost of these in furnishing means has been the house of G. & M. Starbuck & Co., whose enterprise in these days of croaking, is entitled to the highest public consideration. In personal exertion Mathew Starbuck of that firm; Reuben Hallett of the firm of John W. Barrett & Sons; Edward Field, E. W. Perry, Isaac Macy and F. W. Paddock, have been unwearied in their labors to establish a line to Boston, which, if patronized, will bring thousands upon thousands into the pockets of our citizens. In one hour and a half, we can jump into the cars and whizz away for Boston or New York; breakfasting at Nantucket, dining at Boston, and supping at bed time in that city to which the other cities of the United States are the merest babies.

"If all the people of our island were like some that 'cumber the ground,' we should at this very hour have had to depend on a seven-by-nine packet sloop to have gotten to America. We should hardly have advanced on fifty years ago, when a special act was passed by the legislature, allowing thirty days more to Nantucket for the service of executions from the Su-

preme Court of Suffolk, than to the other counties of the state, because of the great uncertainty of the passage. And this law has never been changed.

"There is something in the general arrangement of the boat, its furniture, etc., worthy of remark. An examination convinced us that in her construction and in furnishing her, there was an unusual regard to elegance, convenience, taste and comfort. The furniture of the ladies' cabin is in keeping with the general appearance of the boat. The cushions are all of a fancy velvet and would ornament any parlor. The table, with its marble top and its two splendid pitchers, bearing the words 'Island Home,' the mirror above these, with the well arranged staterooms, give this an air of comfort and elegance rarely seen in a boat of this size. In fact, nothing is wanting to promote the comfort of the travelling public.

"The steamer made her trial trip last Tuesday, and made the run from Fort Hamilton to Governor's Island, a distance of 9 miles, in 31 minutes, against a three-knot tide, with 33 pounds steam. Her machinery worked admirably; not a key or bolt was started on her trip from New York to this place. Both the superintendent, Mr. Merritt, and the engineer, say they never were on board a steamer where the machinery worked so smoothly and perfectly during her first trip.

"Our own interests, most certainly, are identified with the new route, especially when we remember that we have committed ourselves to it to the amount of \$50,000 invested in the Cape Cod railroad. It would be folly and worse than folly to lose sight of this fact. The conveniences, indeed, which are now enjoyed, and the improved facilities for travelling afforded by the new boat, cannot fail to be appreciated. Before one year shall have expired, we dare predict that we shall see ample evidence of the beneficial results of the purchase of a splendid boat, and of the establishment of a company in reference to securing all of the advantages which our position can afford."

#### TOWING A WHALE-SHIP OVER THE BAR.

During the late 50's, the "Island Home" was depended upon to tow the Nantucket ships over the bar, and the men *comprising the steamer's crew* were liable to be called upon for



Steamer "Island Home," Built in 1855.  
Beam 29 feet 8 inches. Length 184 feet.



duty at any hour of the day or night, in order to take advantage of high water. The sailing of a ship on a long sea voyage was an important event to the Nantucket people, and the earlier part of the "Island Home's" service was more or less connected with the sailing and arrival of the Nantucket vessels. Under date of July 28, 1858, a writer thus interestingly records one of these important occasions:

"Our favorite steamer, 'Island Home,' had made her berth alongside of the wharf, the fire was allowed to go down, the passengers landed and everything had the appearance that business was done for the day. But not so; about nine o'clock in the evening, I had the pleasure of meeting Captain Brown, the commander of the Island Home, whose smiling face and friendly shake of the hand pleasantly said, 'There is something going on for a stranger to see.' 'Well, Captain, not a-going to run an express to Hyannis tonight?' 'No, but I am going to take a ship over the bar.'

"I had seen a great many ladies and gentlemen promenading the street that leads down to the wharf, but I thought they were in pursuit of the pure, cool air, that came off from the waters, for a more beautiful evening I never saw. The moon was full and no clouds to be seen, and there was just breeze enough to produce a small ripple on the placid waters of the harbor.

"I accepted the very kind invitation from the gallant commander of the Island Home, to go on board with him and see the ship over the bar. A few taps on the bell gave notice that the steamer was about to start out of the dock to make fast to the ship; then there was a rush of young ladies and gentlemen to get on board, and a more joyous set I never saw.

"On going on board at the forward gangway and looking forward, I saw a ring of about twenty-five young men, and in the middle, one with an accordeon discoursing very good music of the Virginia break-down sort, and three or four tripping the light (or heavy) fantastic toe, in the most approved negro style. As I looked at those young men, it reminded me of such scenes as I have seen on the deck of a whale-ship in the South Pacific ocean, of an evening like this, when thousands of miles from home.

"On going up on the promenade deck, another joyous sight met the eye. Young ladies were seated in groups and singing some very pretty songs, while others were promenading the deck on the arms of some young gentlemen, perhaps their future partners for life. If so, may their lives be always as happy as they appeared to be while towing the ship over the bar. Above all these joyous sounds could be plainly heard the voice of Capt. Brown, giving his orders to the men, and attending in person to see that the two large hawsers were promptly made fast for a heavy tug, in case the ship should ground hard on the bar. Everything being ready, the Captain takes the helm. One touch on the gong notified the engineer to start the iron horse. The steam is let on, the horse gives a few breaths, and the wheels revolve, and the ship leaves her berth, to which it will be some time before she will return again. We approach the first buoy on the bar; the hawsers are trimmed so as to point the ship right; two taps on the gong lets the engineer know it, more steam is let on, the hawsers strain, and the ship's keel grates on the sand; but the steamer goes ahead, and we approach the out buoy. We pass it, the ship is in deep water, and then go up three hearty cheers for the success of the ship on her present voyage. The ship is cast off from the steamer, the hawsers hauled on board and we returned to the wharf, highly pleased with the excursion. The party separated for their homes and to their beds, perhaps to dream of the pleasure of towing a ship over the bar. The steamer *Island Home* is as fine a boat as navigates our waters, and with the gentleman-like deportment of Capt. Brown and his officers, I should think that she must soon become a great favorite with the traveling public."

Although the "*Island Home*" was first commanded by Capt. Thomas Brown, the real history which she made for herself was when Capt. Nathan Manter was at the helm (who was the steamer's first mate.) The name and memory of the "*Island Home*" and "Cap'n Manter" will long live in the minds of all Nantucketers. The old steamer and her bluff, but good-natured skipper, fought many a battle with the elements, weathered many a gale, butted many an ice-field, and won more laurels

for herself than any other craft that ever cruised the waters of New England. She continued on the Nantucket-Hyannis route until the completion of the Woods Hole branch of the railroad, when her terminus was changed from Hyannis to that place. The "Island Home's" first trip on this new route was made on the 18th of July, 1872.

It may be of additional interest to mention some of the "Island Home's" exploits in rendering assistance to vessels in distress, among the more noteworthy of which are the following: Ship Timor in 1855; Liverpool Packet, 1861; Barks Eleanor, 1864, B. Colcord, 1865; steamer Saxon (two times) 1865 and 1870; ship Templar, 1868; bark Harriet Livesley, 1869; U. S. steam frigate Guerriere, 1870; bark Sarah M. Smith, schooners Mary Anna, Matilda M., Mary H. Banks and bark Conquest, 1871; schooners Daniel Reed and Willie and Emma, 1872; bark Flora M. Hurlburt, 1873; schooner Caroline C., 1877, and many other craft of various descriptions.



## CHAPTER X.

## THRILLING EXPERIENCES OF THE "ISLAND HOME."

The old steamer had several exciting experiences of her own and more than once narrowly escaped disaster. In the winter of 1881, in attempting to force her way through the ice, she was caught about three miles back of the bar and imprisoned there for twelve days. Her supply of coal gave out and men were sent out to her from Nantucket drawing sleds laden with fuel. The following winter she was caught out in the sound in a heavy blizzard (the exact date was February 4, 1882) and passed the night anchored near Tuckernuck flats, Captain Manter being unable to grope his way into port. The experience of those on board the vessel at that time was one which has never been forgotten.

When the "Island Home" made her way into port, Sunday morning, Captain Manter was hailed as a hero, and the following day a check for \$500 was presented him by Mr. and Mrs. R. Gardner Chase (who had been on board) to be distributed among the officers and crew of the steamer for their gallant work. Among those on the boat during that fearful experience on the shoals were the Rev. and Mrs. Daniel Rounds, James F. Swain, Miss Lou C. Myrick, R. E. Burgess, John R. Bacon, Herbert L. Grew, Harry C. Mowry (express messenger), and D. A. Snell. Captain Manter related the experiences of that night as follows:

"We were detained at Woods Hole until nearly half-past one, waiting for the other boat, and then put out. When nearly up to Cape Poge, we had fine snow; but the weather was moderate and the wind E. N. E., and I did not anticipate anything serious. We made all our buoys, but after leaving Tuckernuck shoal buoy, the snow increased, and we were unable to see ten feet ahead. Ran out our time to the bar, but could not see the

buoy; then tracked the bar to the eastward about twenty minutes, but still no buoy; came about and ran twenty minutes to the westward, with like result, and as night was coming on and the wind increasing to a strong breeze, decided to anchor, putting out the small anchor with fifteen fathoms of chain, but found we were dragging, and increased the chain to forty fathoms. The night was terrible, and we were finally obliged to put out our large anchor.

"At 5 o'clock in the morning, the wind blew the strongest, and as I made my way along the upper deck, it seemed as if the hurricane deck must blow off. We ripped open sacks of grain to get the bags to wrap about the hawser to prevent its chafing. The boat rode like a duck, though, and when it lighted up toward morning, made land close to us, which we took to be the Cliff, until, later on, we found we were close upon Tucker-nuck, and could see the hotel. I realized the precarious situation, and when the tide had fallen and we began to strike bottom, knew that something must be done, and that quickly, and decided to beach her on the island. Buoyed the large anchor and slipped the cable, then cut the hawser, when the wind favored us, and headed us so we could run for the bar. Our cook, William Orpin, knows every inch of the ground up that way, and he brought her through the slues among the Swile islands into five fathoms of water, when we put for the bar.

"The seas were terrific, and swept clean across the bow, running aft, and Mr. Bucknam, the engineer, was at times almost ankle deep in water in his engine room. The old boat rolled fearfully, and when we reached the outer bar, a wave towering above the hurricane deck struck her as she rose upon it, knocking that hole in the side, and sweeping through to the outer saloon. I wouldn't have given two cents at the time for the boat and all on board, but we have passed safely through it, with all hands safe, but a slight damage to the boat, and with anchors gone, which can be recovered. It was as much worse than being in the ice as you can imagine, and was one of the wildest times I have known in my many years' life on the ocean. We backed and filled across the bar, and the rest you have seen. I forgot to say that the wheel-rope broke once, but we managed with some difficulty to get it repaired."

The "Island Home" had several more narrow escapes from disaster, but seemed to bear a charmed life. Memories of the boat are dear to many of the present generation, for she continued on the Nantucket line four decades and did remarkable service, being sold in 1895 and afterwards converted into a coal barge, her usefulness as a passenger boat having ceased. The staunch old boat had actually worn herself out in service, although it is said that when she was stripped of her upperworks, preparatory to conversion into an undignified coal barge, her hull was found to be as sound as it was when she slid off the ways at New York in the summer of 1855.

#### DEATH OF CAPTAIN MANTER.

Captain Nathan H. Manter was born in Nantucket, May 18, 1818—the year the first steamboat, the little "Eagle," ploughed the waters of Nantucket sound. He lived to witness many changes in the island steamboat service and his record as a captain was one any man might be proud of. He retired from active service in 1891, having been in the employ of the island steamers about forty years, thirty of which he had spent at the helm of the "Island Home." According to his own estimate, he had rounded Brant point more than forty thousand times—and this without serious loss or mishap of any kind, although he passed through many trying experiences that tested his courage as a man as well as his skill as a mariner.

His death occurred on February 6th, 1897, at the age of 78 years, 9 months, and the pall-bearers who lowered the remains of the venerable captain to their last resting place were four men who had served as officers with him on the "Island Home," namely: William Fitzgerald, 1st officer; Albion K. P. Bucknam, engineer; C. C. Crosby, purser; Charles H. Allen, express messenger. The latter is the only one of this quartet now living.

There is, however, still residing on Nantucket, in the person of George W. Francis, one other man who served many years on the old "Island Home." Mr. Francis was assistant engineer of the steamer, and was in service with Captain Manter for a long period. He has vivid recollections of the exciting experiences of the old boat as outlined above, and can recite



Captain Nathan H. Manter.  
Born May 18, 1818.  
Died February 6, 1897.



many interesting anecdotes in connection with the operation of the "Island Home," which proved the masterful skill of her venerable commander.

Upon the death of Captain Manter, Dr. Arthur Elwell Jenks wrote the following tribute to his memory, which was published in the Inquirer and Mirror in its issue of February 13, 1897:

OUR VETERAN CAPTAIN.

Never again, oh, never,  
Dismantled "Island Home,"  
Will you bear your gallant captain  
O'er seas he loved to roam!

Wind from the East, no longer  
Your menace of wrath he hears;  
No more 'neath threatening storm cloud,  
He stands and bravely steers.

Ever he looked to seaward  
With calm unflinching eye;  
Never his courage faltered,  
When icy gales swept by.

Wreaths for our noble captain,  
And love for his honored name;  
Who, true to the law of duty,  
Disarmed the shafts of blame.

One day to be remembered—  
Near the shoals, off Tuckernuck,  
On the biting reef and sand-bar,  
The fated steamer struck!

Ah, what dismay befell him!  
Blind with the white sea-drift,  
He prayed to God above him,  
The struggling boat to lift.

Her oaken timbers stiffened,  
Thus bound on reef and rack;  
Of courage in her frenzied crew,  
Indeed there was no lack.

Can pen portray the horror  
Of that beleaguered boat,  
So near the waiting loved ones  
At home, or ever note

The agony that pleaded  
 For Mercy's gentle hand  
 To stay the Arctic demons,  
 And bring her safe to land?

He heard the ocean's moaning,  
 Hard by the dismal shore;  
 This tried and trusty helmsman  
 Defied its rage and roar!

Its Titan strength he mastered,  
 With nerves like tempered steel;  
 With trust in his faithful engineer,\*  
 He stood by his groaning wheel!

At last he reached the harbor;  
 Up from the dear old town  
 A psalm of joy ascended—  
 For him, deathless renown!

Our captain, now safe-harbored,  
 Rests by the jasper sea,  
 All painful voyages ended;  
 Forevermore to be

Crowned with the Master's blessing,  
 "Well done!" Long we shall tell  
 The deeds so brave and manly,  
 Of one we loved so well!

ARTHUR ELWELL JENKS.

\*A. K. P. Bucknam.



Steamer "John W. D. Pentz," (the old "Massachusetts")  
at Alexandria, Va., Wharf, in 1863.





## CHAPTER XI.

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In the issue of the Nantucket Inquirer of September 10, 1855, the "Massachusetts" and the "Telegraph" were offered for sale, together with all other property owned by the Nantucket Steamboat Company, which ceased active operations upon the arrival of the "Island Home" on the route. It took several years, however, for the old company to wind up its affairs, and from 1857 to 1859 the stockholders continued to meet in the counting room of George C. Macy—the building now used as an office by W. T. Swain & Co. The last gathering of the old board was held in February, 1859, and the last dividend was paid on August 26 of that year, when the hotel, steamers and other property had finally been sold.

It was on Monday, the 5th of July, 1858, that the steamers "Telegraph" and "Massachusetts" left Nantucket for good, having been sold to New Jersey parties, the passing of the old boats being chronicled in the Mirror of July 10th in the following terms:

"The steamers 'Massachusetts' and 'Telegraph,' the property of the Nantucket and New Bedford Steamboat Company, were sold on Saturday last to Captain Emerson, of Keyport, N. J. They left for New York on Monday last, the 'Massachusetts' taking the 'Telegraph' in tow, and were piloted to that city by Capt. A. H. Robinson. It was pleasing to see how the 'Massachusetts' led the old 'Telegraph' on her course, like maturity sustaining and guiding the tottering footsteps of age, lapsed into second childhood."

### LATER SERVICE OF THE "MASSACHUSETTS."

What became of the "Telegraph" after she reached New Jersey is not known, but as she had apparently outlived her usefulness as a steamboat it is probable that she "went to the scrap-heap," although some are of the opinion that she was used for two or three years as a "tender" in New York harbor. When the "Massachusetts" left Nantucket, she was but six-

teen years old, and was still a staunch and able craft, with many more years of active service before her. During the Civil War she was used as a dispatch boat at Fortress Monroe, and bore on her paddle-boxes the name "John W. D. Pentz," but still retained the old name "Massachusetts" on her stern.

Several of the Nantucket men who served during the Civil War recall having seen the old "Massachusetts" when she was in operation around Chesapeake bay under the name of the "John W. D. Pentz," the boat having been remodelled somewhat in order to accommodate herself to the new service, but still retaining the familiar shape and general appearance of the "Massachusetts." Josiah F. Murphey of Nantucket clearly recalls strolling down the wharf at Alexandria, Va., one day, and noticing a steamer lying there, had his curiosity aroused by her familiar appearance. Inquiry revealed the fact that it really was the old Nantucket steamer "Massachusetts" sailing under another name, and Mr. Murphey procured a photograph of the boat as she lay at the Alexandria dock and has carefully preserved it over forty years. It is from this photograph that the accompanying illustration was made.

At the close of the war the steamer resumed her proper name "Massachusetts," and for a number of years plied as a passenger steamer on the Chesapeake bay between Baltimore and St. Michaels, having been rebuilt, with some forty-odd staterooms. Captain and Mrs. John Killen of Nantucket were passengers on the boat in the year 1872, and the former relates the experience with no small degree of pleasure, for it was some thirty years after the steamer was placed on the Nantucket route, and she was still an able craft. A few years later the "Massachusetts" passed into the control of the Maryland Steamship Company of Baltimore, and on March 28, 1876, made her first trip on what was known "as the great Wicomico and Plankatauk rivers, and Dividing and Dymers creeks' route from Baltimore to Freeport," making fifteen landings between the two places. She continued to ply about Chesapeake bay until the early eighties, after which the writer has been unable to learn what actually became of the old craft.

### NANTUCKET'S PACKET SERVICE.

It was not until the year 1844 that the Steamboat Company had contracted with the government for transporting the island mails, and along in the 30's and 40's the mail was brought to the island by the numerous packets which ran to New Bedford, Boston and other places, each boat carrying her own mail sack, and on the arrival in Nantucket of either a packet or a whale-ship it is said the distribution of the mail was quite an important and unique event. As soon as the boat had docked, some person who was the possessor of a loud, clear voice, would mount a pile of wood, and plunging his hand into the sack, would call forth the names of the persons who had letters, in about the style presents are distributed from Christmas trees. In those days it used to cost 12 cents to send a letter to Boston, and consequently the amount of correspondence forwarded to and from the island was not great, being mostly of a business nature. The arrival of the packet, whether the "Tawtemeo" from New Bedford, or one from Boston, Albany, New York or Baltimore, was always an important event to Nantucketers, even though the island was enjoying intermittent steamboat service with the mainland at that period.

A mast 108 feet high was for a number of years maintained on a site at the rear of the postoffice, then located on Main street, opposite Federal, from which signals were displayed for the information of the townspeople, denoting the approach and arrival of a steamer or packet. When the boat was sighted a flag was flown from the mast-head of the signal staff, and when the mail reached the postoffice, the flag was hauled down and a large black ball run up, and by this means the inhabitants were kept in touch with the arrival of the mail. When the mail from California arrived, the ball was covered with a white sack to announce that welcome fact, and the postoffice was soon crowded with expectant friends of the many Nantucketers in that far-off land. Letter postage to California in the early days was fifty cents.

There are doubtless many persons still living who recall the old sloop "Tawtemeo," which succeeded the "Portugal," and ran as a packet for many years between Nantucket and New

Bedford under command of Capt. John Ray. The "Tawtemeo" was first owned by the Nantucket Steamboat Company, and in 1855 was sold for \$2,300 to Captain Ray. This old sloop was frequently used for transporting the mails at times when the island steamers were not in service, and, in a way, her history is entwined with that of the old steamboats. She continued in service as a "packet" until May, 1881, when she was sold and left Nantucket, the death of her venerable skipper having occurred a few months prior to her departure. The old sloop ended her days as a barge on the Connecticut coast. Few are there of Nantucket lineage who, in speaking of the old "Tawtemeo," do not recall at least a portion of the following little "jingle" penned by the late William H. Macy:

The shades of night were falling fast,  
As round Brant point a good sloop passed,  
And to the pier her hawsers cast—

—Tawtemeo!

Then music raised its stirring tone,  
Great guns were fired and fog-horns blown,  
That her arrival might be known—

—Tawtemeo!

Once more, in his own native place,  
The Captain, with his Ray-diant face,  
Can tell his stories with a grace—

—Tawtemeo!

How for two months he has been gone,  
Long enough to have reached Cape Horn—  
In Woods Hole, ice-bound and forlorn—

—Tawtemeo!

Long may the honest captain tell  
Of all the mishaps that befell,  
During that long, cold, bitter spell—

—Tawtemeo!

Through ice-fields did the good sloop drive  
In eighteen hundred seventy-five  
She came forth safe and all alive—

—Tawtemeo!

Propitious gales the old craft bless  
Through many years of good success.  
And "may her shadow ne'er grow less!"

—Tawtemeo!



Capt. John Ray, of Nantucket's Famous  
Packet "Tawtemeo."





Capt. John Ray, of Nantucket's Famous  
Packet "Tawtemeo."

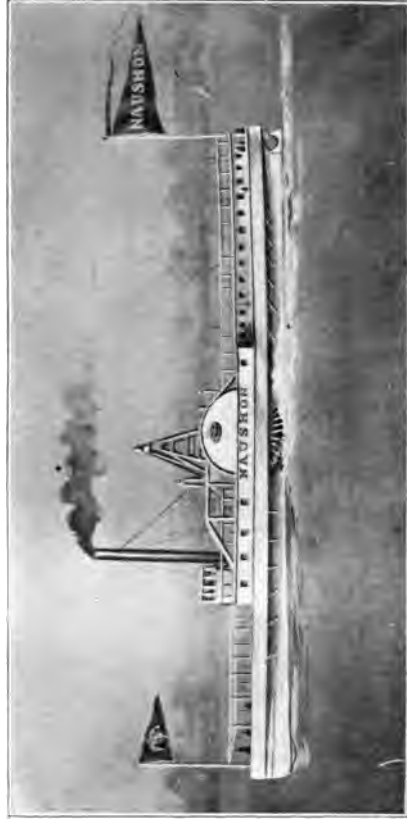


barge, she having proved a dismal failure as a propeller. Henry Paddack, of Nantucket, clearly recalls working on the "Jersey Blue" when he was a painter's apprentice, just learning his trade, and looks upon it as a coincidence that Mr. Long, the steamer's mate, later became his business partner.

One other propeller steamer is recorded as having made trips to and from Nantucket—the "Osceola," a craft owned by Connecticut parties, who endeavored to start a line between Nantucket and New London and Hartford, in hopes to create increased freight traffic. The "Osceola" made her first trip to Nantucket on August 4, 1848, and brought ninety-six passengers, the majority of whom came for the outing and returned on the steamer two days later. The "Osceola" made a half dozen trips that month, but it was soon seen that there was no money in the scheme, and the steamer was withdrawn.

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Mention should also be made of one other steamer which came to Nantucket in the early days of steamboating—the "Bradford Durfee," whose visit to the island was a most important event to the islanders. When the "Great Fire of 1846" wiped a large section of the town out of existence on the 13th of July, numerous near-by places on the mainland were prompt in sending assistance to the stricken inhabitants, and the steamer "Bradford Durfee" was detailed to bring relief to Nantucket by the citizens of Fall River, Providence and New Bedford. The steamer was a comparatively new boat at the time, having been built at New York in 1845, and this trip to Nantucket was one of the most important events in her existence. She was of 388 tons, with a length of 154 feet and beam 25 feet, and was abandoned as unfit for service on the 31st of December, 1883. The illustration of the steamer appearing in this book was taken some years ago, when the steamers "Bradford Durfee" and "Canonicus" were laid up at a wharf in Fall River, and is taken from a photograph in the possession of Elisha T. Jenks of Middleboro. The "Durfee" is interesting from the fact that she followed the "King Philip," which had the first steam whistle, placed in her in 1832 by Stephen G. Collins, who afterwards became engineer of the "Durfee."



Steamer "Naushon." Built in 1845. Length 151 feet. Beam 22 feet.

In 1848 this steamer became the "News Boy."

From an old painting owned by Freeman C. Smith of Edgartown, a grandson of Capt. Holmes W. Smith, master of the "Naushon."



## CHAPTER XII.

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### DEVELOPMENT OF THE VINEYARD COMPANY.

There are some very interesting facts on record bearing on the progress and development of the original Vineyard company into the present New Bedford, Martha's Vineyard & Nantucket Steamboat company. It has already been stated how the company came to place in service (as an opposition line to the Nantucket Steamboat Company) the steamer "Eagle's Wing," and although she was the only boat operated regularly between New Bedford and Nantucket by the Vineyard company until the "Martha's Vineyard" was built in 1871, several steamers owned and operated in the Vineyard service made occasional trips to Nantucket prior to the placing of the "Eagle's Wing" on that line. Among these steamers was the "Naushon," a boat which in after years gained considerable fame for herself. The "Naushon" was built late in 1845 at a cost of \$26,000, was of 285 tons, 151 feet long, 22 feet beam, and made occasional trips to Nantucket before she went into the Vineyard service regularly, the first time she came to the island being on the 13th of February, 1846, when the owners of the boat attempted to create an interest among the local merchants in the new steamer, knowing that some dissatisfaction was being shown regarding the way the "Telegraph" and "Massachusetts" were being operated. The attempt was unsuccessful, and although the "Naushon" remained at Nantucket five days, her owners soon realized that the islanders were willing to swallow their dissatisfaction rather than transfer their allegiance to the Vineyard line.

#### STEAMER "NAUSHON."

The "Naushon" was operated by the New Bedford & Martha's Vineyard Steamboat company, and after March 23, 1846, the steamer commenced running on a regular tri-weekly schedule between Edgartown and New Bedford, "stopping en route

at Woods Hole (Falmouth) and Holmes Hole." She was commanded by Capt. Holmes W. Smith, who was the father of John P. Smith, the present mate of steamer "Uncatena." It is said that the "Naushon" was never run with profit, and that the cost of operating the steamer during the year 1847 was seven hundred dollars more than the receipts, so early in January, 1848, she was offered for sale.

The owners of the "Naushon" had not, however, abandoned the idea of placing the boat on the Nantucket route, for in March, 1848, word was sent to the island that unless the Nantucket Steamboat Company would agree to have the steamer "Massachusetts" stop at Edgartown on her passage to and from New Bedford, the "Naushon" would be put through to Nantucket as an opposition line. This threat apparently caused uneasiness among the stockholders of the Nantucket Company, for they actually passed a vote that the wish of the Vineyard people should be granted. Such a wall of protest went up, however, from the residents of Nantucket, at the very thought of thus increasing the running time between that island and New Bedford, that the steamboat company did not have the courage to give the scheme a trial and within three weeks had rescinded the vote.

The suggestion of running the "Naushon" through to Nantucket developed to be merely a "bluff," for on April 27, 1848, the steamer was sold at public auction for \$15,500, having been a financial failure in the island service. She was purchased by two of New York's leading newspapers, which later shared with three other enterprising city contemporaries in the venture, and for several years the "Naushon" was conducted jointly by the Sun, Journal of Commerce, Herald, Courier and Express, for the purpose of obtaining news of a marine nature, and was stationed outside of Sandy Hook every day to obtain information from incoming vessels, making a trip back to New York city every evening, and as much oftener as the delivery of news required. In making announcement of the scheme the Sun had the following to say:

"For the object to be attained, a more suitable steamer is not to be found, to our knowledge, in the United States. The Naushon is



Steamer "Metacomet." Reproduced from an old photograph in the possession of Edward A. Clark of New Bedford.

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nearly new, expensively built, large, exceedingly strong, and has a powerful engine. She was built expressly for running on the open ocean, and is particularly adapted to exposure and sea service. Besides these qualities may be added that indispensable one—speed—being fully capable of making twenty miles within an hour. The merits spoken of were fully testified to in the memorable gale in which the Atlantic was wrecked, when she was exposed in open sea and afterwards made port in perfect safety."

The name of the "Naushon" was soon changed to "News Boy" and as such she continued in the newspaper service for several years, and, owing to her speed, could easily reach port with the news ahead of incoming ships. Upon one occasion, in the fall of 1848, she raced from Sandy Hook with the Cambria and the Cherokee, and led the former five miles and the latter one mile on the run to New York. It is said that the "News Boy" finally went into the Coney Island service.

#### THE "METACOMET."

The steamer "Metacomet" was built at New York in 1854, was of 395 tons, 119 feet long, 26 feet beam, and was placed on the route between Edgartown and Fairhaven, as an opposition line to the "Eagle's Wing," to run in connection with the Fairhaven branch of the railroad. The "Metacomet" was owned by Fall River and Providence capitalists, and was commanded by Capt. "Ben" Simmons, formerly of steamer "Canonicus," and in later years commodore captain on the Fall River line. Her engineer was George B. Orswell, who was later chief engineer of the New Bedford, Vineyard & Nantucket Steamboat company. The "Metacomet" made her first trip in the Vineyard service on Thursday, October 5, 1854, the Edgartown Gazette chronicling the event in the following terms:

"Arrival of the Metacomet! The big guns brought out! The new and beautiful steamer Metacomet, which is to ply between this place and Fairhaven, arrived here on her first trip, Thursday afternoon. As the Metacomet rounded East Chop, a cannon was fired as a signal of her approach, and as she entered our harbor, a salute of fifty guns and the hearty cheers of our people welcomed her arrival among us."

Although not employed regularly in the Nantucket service, the "Metacomet" made frequent excursions to the island, and

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\*"Metacomet" was the right name for "King Phillip," the famous Indian chief.



at one time brought over the entire complement of town and port officers (collector and deputies) of Edgartown, accompanied by the Edgartown Quadrille Band. These eventful trips occurred during July and August, 1856, and the "Metacomet" is said to have made the passage across from Edgartown to Nantucket in less than two hours.

During the running of the opposition lines between New Bedford and the Vineyard, neither company made any money, so the "Metacomet" was withdrawn late in 1857, and a few months afterwards was purchased by the government, entering the navy as the gun-boat "Pulaski." The steamer was finally sold at Montevideo, Uruguay, in 1863, and according to statements made by the late Joseph W. Clapp of Nantucket, was plying on the LaPlatte river as late as 1870.

#### THE BUILDING OF THE "MONOHANSETT."

With the loss of the "Eagle's Wing" in 1861, the New Bedford, Vineyard & Nantucket company was without steam communication between New Bedford and the islands, so in 1862 the "Monohansett" was built to replace the "Eagle's Wing," the engine from the latter being fitted into the new boat. The "Monohansett" was built a foot or two narrower than was proper for her length, in order to use the old shafts from the "Eagle's Wing," and this feature made her rather a bad sea-boat when she grew older and rested deeper in the water. At the time she was built she was probably the best "side-wheeler" on the Atlantic coast, and during the Civil War she was used to carry despatches to the fleet operating in the Atlantic ocean off Cape Hatteras and Wilmington, N. C., and later was used in the waters of Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac river, for the same purpose.

During the time the "Monohansett" was under charter to the government, and to meet the "kick" of the Vineyard people, (who did not relish being deprived of steamboat service), a small propeller steamer named the "Helen Augusta" was brought into service, in February, 1865, remaining until the "Monohansett" was restored to the route in June of the following year. The "Helen Augusta" was used for towing and freight



Steamer "Monohansett" in the ice off Nantucket, February 17, 1899.



service about Buzzards Bay and Vineyard sound for twelve or thirteen years after the return of the "Monohansett" to the regular route. At the close of the war, the "Monohansett" returned to the island service for which she was built, and for years was known as "the regular Vineyard boat."

The "Monohansett" was never placed in regular service to and from Nantucket, yet she made occasional trips to the island, and proved herself of service in relieving the people of Nantucket from the monotony of long periods of isolation during "freeze-ups." The first of these experiences of the "Monohansett" in forcing passage through the ice to the relief of Nantucket was on March 2, 1873, when she effected a landing at Brant point. February 8th, 1881, she landed passengers and mail at Great point; in 1885 made another landing at Quidnet, and on the 17th of February, 1899, forced her way into the ice near the jetty and landed provisions, passengers and mail over the ice—at which time the accompanying illustration of the steamer was taken.

On Sunday, the 15th of October, 1900, the "Monohansett" came to Nantucket and endeavored to pull from Coatue flats her sister steamer "Martha's Vineyard," which went aground there the previous day during a dense fog. The "Monohansett" was unable to move the other steamer, however, and returned to Edgartown when it was seen that her efforts were useless, leaving the task for the "Gay Head" to do the following day. This was actually her last trip to Nantucket, as it proved, for she was shortly afterwards sold by the N. B., M. V. & N. Steamboat company, and was used around Boston and the waters of the "north shore." The "Monohansett" was wrecked and became a total loss in June, 1904, on Misery Island, Salem harbor, while bound from Gloucester to Boston and trying to reach the wharf at Salem Willows in a dense fog, an excellent illustration of which mishap appears in this book.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### SERVICE OF THE "RIVER QUEEN."

The steamer "River Queen" (one of the oldest side-wheelers now in service) was built at Keyport, N. J., in 1864, is 181 feet long, 28 1-2 feet beam, and of 587 tons. She was used by General Grant as his private dispatch boat on the Potomac river during the last year of the Civil War, was later operated by the Newport Steamboat Company between Providence and Newport, and was in service across Nantucket sound as the running mate to the "Island Home" from 1873 to 1880—about eight years. The "River Queen" was first placed in service about the Vineyard and Nantucket sounds by the Vineyard company, which bought and operated her in 1871-2 (when the railroad was extended to Woods Hole) to replace the "Monohansett," which had been chartered to the Old Colony railroad to run in connection with its Woods Hole branch. The "River Queen" was maintained by the Vineyard company about two years and was then sold for \$60,000 to the Nantucket & Cape Cod Steamboat company, making her first trip to Nantucket on May 26, 1873—when she was nine years old—under command of Captain Cromwell.

It was the next year (1874) that the third radical change in the island steamboat service occurred, for that summer chronicled three noteworthy events—the inauguration of a two-boats-a-day schedule for the first time, the reconstruction of the steamboat wharf at Nantucket, and the erection of the restaurant building on the north side of the wharf, (where the building remained until a few years ago, when it was purchased by Capt. John Killen and removed to a site on Pine street and converted into a dwelling).

The fact that the island company had, through the purchase of the "River Queen," two steamers available for its service to and from Nantucket, caused the directors to try the experi-



Steamer "River Queen." Built in 1864. Length 181 feet. Beam  $28\frac{1}{2}$  feet.  
From a photograph in possession of Elisha T. Jenks of Middleboro.



ment of running "two-boats-a-day," in response to the earnest efforts made by the late Joseph S. Barney and others, in that direction, and the experiment proved so successful that the following summer (1875) the company commenced operating its first Sunday boat in connection with the two-boats-a-day service.

The "River Queen" was commanded by the late Captain George H. Brock of Nantucket, and continued in service until the autumn of 1881, when she was removed from the island service and for several years was chartered to various parties around New York and farther south. She returned to New Bedford in the early fall of 1891, and took the place of steamer "Nantucket" upon one occasion, while the latter boat was overhauling her boiler. During the following winter she was sold to the Mount Vernon & Marshall Hall Steamboat company, of Washington, D. C., and for nineteen years has been in service on the Potomac river.

It was on one of the passages across the sound on the "River Queen" with Captain Brock at the helm, that Miss Anna C. Starbuck (Mrs. A. E. Jenks) penned the following poem, which was published in the Rochester, N. Y., Democrat, early in July, 1878:

On board the steamer "River Queen,"  
 In sight of my dear old island home,  
 My heart leaps forth to the perfect scene,  
 As I sip the spray of the ocean foam.  
 Good-bye to the heat and the city's din,  
 Good-bye to prose with its leaden fold;  
 Come rhythmic dreams on the surf-bound shore,  
 With peace and health and joy untold!  
 The winds shall sing a lullaby  
 To all the past of grief and pain;  
 The ripple of the wavelet's laugh  
 Shall soothe me with its low refrain.  
 O, perfect heart of a perfect God,  
 That beats through the flow and the ebb o' the tide,  
 Thanks to Thy grace that brings me back,  
 Back to the home of my love and pride!  
 Oh, happy isle on the ocean's breast,  
 Thy ships are idle, thy commerce dead;  
 But the angel of health "sits up aloft"  
 And sheds a halo o'er thy head!



The "River Queen," besides gaining fame as General Grant's dispatch boat, has considerable notoriety from the fact that it was on board her that the celebrated conference between President Lincoln of the United States and A. H. Stephens, the Vice-President of the Southern Confederacy, took place, and a room on the upper deck is still shown as the one in which this noteworthy event occurred, Capt. Nathan B. Saunders, the veteran captain of the Fall River Line steamers (now retired), being in command of the "River Queen" at that period. Captain Saunders has a distinct recollection of President Lincoln, and states that the great emancipator frequently took passages on the steamer, returning from one of these trips on the boat barely forty-eight hours before he was assassinated.

The "River Queen" is, at this late date, one of the most popular excursion boats on the Potomac river, and is a serviceable craft, although now forty-six years old. The accompanying picture of the steamer was taken as she lay at her pier on the Potomac a short time ago, and the model of the boat appears to have been changed but little since she left the Nantucket service.

#### "MARTHAS VINEYARD" BUILT.

The "Marthas Vineyard" was built by the Vineyard company in 1871, especially for its service, and operated by that company prior to the consolidation with the Nantucket company in 1886. She is now used as a "spare boat," is 171 feet long and 28 feet beam, and is considered the fastest boat in the fleet in smooth weather, having to her record the quickest passage made by either of the present steamers between Nantucket and New Bedford.

After the construction of the "Marthas Vineyard" in 1871, no more boats were built for the Vineyard line until 1886, when the consolidation of the "Nantucket & Cape Cod Steamboat Company" with the "New Bedford, Vineyard & Nantucket Steamboat Company" occurred. The new company was named the "New Bedford, Marthas Vineyard & Nantucket Steamboat Company" and immediately after the consolidation it commenced the construction of the steamer "Nantucket," and since



Steamer "Marthas Vineyard." Built in 1871. Length 171 feet. Beam 28 feet.



that time has added the "Gay Head" and "Uncatena" to its fleet, disposing of the old steamers "Island Home" and "Monohansett," but still retaining the "Marthas Vineyard" for use as an excursion steamer. This old boat is now nearing forty years, but her engine is said to be as good to this day as that in either of the other boats, and her hull was rebuilt in 1906.

### CONSOLIDATION.

Although the consolidation of the two companies did not actually occur until 1886, there was a period of five years prior to that date when the Nantucket & Cape Cod Steamboat Company was operated by Andrew G. Pierce of New Bedford, as agent, and in conjunction with the property of the New Bedford, Vineyard & Nantucket Steamboat Company. This was due to the fact that the old Nantucket company was heavily in debt and was running at a loss in competition with the Vineyard company, and through the influence of the late Joseph S. Barney and J. R. Kendrick, the Vineyard company was persuaded to undertake the joint operation of the two properties, this resulting in the actual consolidation of the companies in 1886, and the continuation of the service between Nantucket and New Bedford.

Upon this consolidation of the two companies in 1886, the steamer "Nantucket" was built, by vote of the directors, for the Nantucket route, and for twenty-four years practically her entire service has been to and from that island. She is of 629 gross tons, 190 feet long and 33 feet beam, and the service to which she has been subjected year after year proves her a worthy successor of the "Island Home." The description of the "Nantucket" as published at the time of her construction was as follows:

"Where the other boats draw in the neighborhood of six feet of water, the Nantucket does not draw over four and a half feet. She has a guaranteed speed of 15 statute miles an hour.

"She is copper fastened and her frames are double throughout, being of white oak, hackmatack and cedar. Her bottom is sheathed with copper furnished by the New Bedford Copper Company. The hull is provided with three water-tight iron bulkheads, as required by law; one, a collision bulkhead situated forward; another forward of the boiler and the third aft the boiler. Her keelson is of yellow

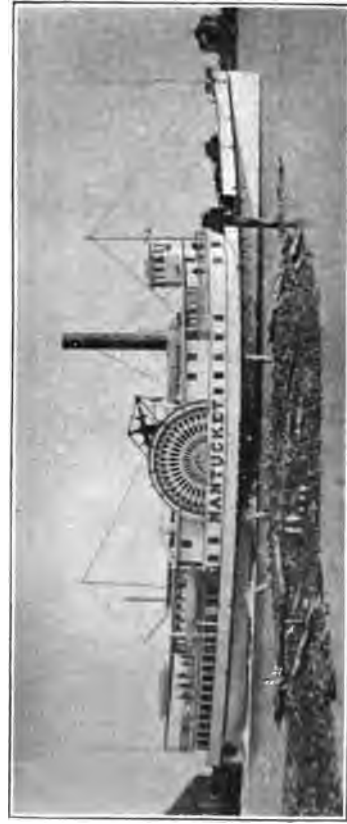
pine. She has a promenade deck above the main deck, and two masts.

"She is provided with one return tubular boiler, 15 feet in length and 13 feet in diameter. Her cylinder is 48 inches in diameter, with a ten-foot stroke, and she has a surface condenser which does away with feed water tanks."

#### ARRIVAL OF STEAMER "NANTUCKET."

The first trip of the "Nantucket" was made on Saturday, the 31st day of July, 1886, under command of Capt. Charles C. Smith. This is the way the local press commented upon the event:

"As was anticipated, a large crowd awaited the arrival of the Nantucket, Saturday evening, and as the noble boat steamed into her berth, flying her numerous excursion flags, there was a general expression of satisfaction and a constant waving of kerchiefs ashore and on board. An examination of the boat under the guidance of Purser Bacon proved that the description of her previously given in the columns of the Inquirer and Mirror did not picture her in too brilliant colors, being, if anything, a little meagre. We will not attempt to improve upon it, for fear of another failure, and will content ourselves by repeating the statements of Capt. Smith and Mr. Bacon, who said she had proved herself better than had been anticipated in every particular. She is certainly one of the most magnificent boats of her class afloat, and is a credit to her builders and a prize to the corporation which owns her. An excellent opportunity to test her was afforded Monday, when the wind fairly howled from the northwest, and in the face of the gale and strong head tide, and by the ship channel route, which is the longer, she made the run to Cottage City in two hours and thirty minutes, and 'worked like a charm.' Since she went upon the route she has brought a large number of persons, and the popular verdict is that she is fine. She is certainly developing great speed, which will be increased as her machinery 'limbers up.' The 'captain's office,' which is the only place to which the captain never goes, and which the purser claims as his sanctum, is one of the best appointed steamboat offices we have ever seen."



Steamer "Nantucket." Built in 1886. Length 190 feet. Beam 33 feet.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### "GAY HEAD" LARGEST BOAT IN FLEET.

The largest boat in the fleet is the Gay Head, which was built in 1891 and made her first trip to Nantucket on July 8th. She is of 701 tons, is 203 feet long, 34 feet beam, and has a draught of 5 1-2 feet, with encased paddle-wheels. She is supplied with a one-beam engine of the Pusey Jones & Co., Philadelphia, make, of the surface condensing pattern, with a cylinder 50 inches in diameter and a 10-foot stroke. She has two steel boilers 20 feet in length and 108 inches in diameter, which afford a pressure of 50 pounds to the square inch. The engine is held in position by an iron frame, about which no wood is used. Her wheels are those with the patent revolving buckets, which afford more space for room above than the old style wheel. The description of the "Gay Head," published in 1891, follows:

"Her main deck forward is wide and deep for freight, and aft are the ladies' saloon, toilet rooms and social hall, all fitted in the Neapolitan style, with gold trimmings. The wood work is of cherry, and the side seats are covered with maroon plush upholstery. The social hall floor is laid with black walnut and maple. This is 50 feet long. Wash room and an office occupy places aft of the wheels. In the after hold is the galley, mess rooms, officers' rooms, all of which are conveniently arranged. The forecabin is also well arranged with berths for the crew. Above the main deck is the forward promenade and upper saloon, which are reached fore and aft by richly carved staircases. On either side are five state-rooms, fitted with willow furniture for summer. At the side are cupboards for the stowing away of the life preservers. This does away with the arrangement of racks overhead and does not mar the beauty of the fine white paint, gold trimmings and the shading of different colored French glass windows overhead. The after promenade is large and fitted in keeping with the other parts of the craft. The hurricane deck extends from the stern to the pilot house and is spacious. A roomy pilot house offsets the structure, in which is the steam steering gear and the hand gear. Back of these are large quarters for



the captain, mate and quartermaster. The craft is heated throughout by steam."

The "Gay Head" received a grand ovation upon her arrival, with band music, tooting of horns, ringing of bells, together with a pyrotechnic display, which event was reported in the Inquirer and Mirror as follows:

"Nantucket did herself proud, Wednesday, in the grand reception tendered the new steamer Gay Head, and the steamboat officials and officers could not feel otherwise than jubilant at the cordial welcome extended the new boat. While the weather was not as was fondly hoped for, yet the slight rainfall during the evening marred but little the enjoyment and success of the program arranged by the reception committee.

"A despatch announced that the boat would reach here by 6.30 p. m., and the intelligence was quickly forwarded about the town, and by 5 o'clock people were on the move to secure points of vantage on Steamboat wharf, which was packed by a patient, good-natured crowd of sight-seers, long before the boat reached here. The sailboats' ensigns fluttered from their masts, banners floated from staffs on the freight house; and at several places up the wharf, public spirited citizens had strung bunting as their contribution to the cordial greeting. The High school flag fluttered gaily, also. As the Gay Head reached the bar, the whistle on the electric light station opened the salute, the little Coskata seconded the motion, and the Gay Head sent forth a prolonged response. As she drew down opposite the Nantucket, a gun on the Athletic Club's grounds opened up a booming salute, and the committee sent up day fireworks from the end of the pier, and added to the din a contribution of yacht salutes, which were exploded in the dock, sending up volumes of spray.

"As the noble craft sailed majestically into her berth, unmindful of the water's commotion, there was a grand murmur of approval of her symmetrical form. Eager ones on the dock waited not for the lines to be secured, but leaped aboard to extend their congratulations to the officers, who modestly withstood the onslaught. The passengers had hardly reached the wharf before the people hurried on board, eager to see the boat, but darkness came too soon to give them a full chance to



Steamer "Gay Head." Built in 1891. Length 203 feet. Beam 34 feet.



enjoy the excellent piece of marine architecture, as no opportunity had been afforded to arrange the lamps on board. During the time when the boat was nearing the pier, and while the passengers were landing, the band on board discoursed fine music, and cheers were given for the new Gay Head.

"About 8 o'clock, the band returned from supper and took their places in the stand built for the occasion, while long rows of seats set along the north side of the wharf were filled with invited guests, and on every hand the people were crowded, patiently awaiting the fireworks, although a very light rain was falling, which threatened to sadly interfere with this part of the exhibition. The Athletic Club's grounds proved a well-chosen place for pyrotechnics, furnishing the crowd an unobstructed view of the display, which ceased shortly before 9 o'clock. The band during that hour, discoursed excellent music, which was very much enjoyed, and the crowd dispersed after giving three rousing cheers for the new Gay Head. The committee in charge used good judgment in hurrying the fireworks, barely escaping the heavy rain which set in just after the exhibition closed."

The "Gay Head" was officered as follows: "Captain A. P. Bartow; 1st officer, G. G. Fisher; 2nd officer, Charles Holmes; engineer, W. B. Orswell; purser, J. R. Bacon; assistant purser, W. A. Smith; steward, Antoine Medina; baggage master, John McCormick. That season (1891) the roster of steamer "Nantucket's" officers was: Captain, G. L. Daggett; 1st officer, W. D. Sylvia; 2nd officer, E. A. Titcomb; engineer, W. P. Rex; purser, L. E. Crowell; clerk, C. G. Whiton; steward, Manuel DaCosta; baggage master, Alfred Sladen.

The "Gay Head" was for a number of years commanded by Capt. Charles H. Fishback, of Nantucket, but for three seasons has been in charge of Capt. Charles H. Coulter, who resigned in the fall of 1909 and has been succeeded by Capt. J. W. Merriman.

It is something of a coincidence that the day the Gay Head made her first trip was also the day when Chauncey G. Whiton, the present agent and treasurer of the steamboat company, first entered the company's service as clerk on the steamer "Nantucket."

### STEAMER "UNCATENA" FIRST STEEL BOAT.

Steamer "Uncatena" is the latest addition to the fleet. She was built in 1902, is of 652 gross tons, is 187 feet long and 31 feet beam, and was constructed from designs and plans based almost wholly upon blueprints and specifications drawn up by Agent Whiton during the winter of 1900-1901. She is a very able and seaworthy boat, but was built mainly for the Vineyard route, and comes to Nantucket only when the "alternating schedule" is in effect during the spring and autumn of each year. Her first trip to Nantucket was made on Friday, October 31, 1902, in command of Captain Marshall, with the veteran purser Samuel Ripley on duty, and John Splaine in the capacity of engineer.

The steamer's arrival was greeted by a large throng of people on the wharf, and the whistles on the electric works and the barge John Spankalina added to the demonstration in the "Uncatena's" honor. Agent Whiton came down with the boat and modestly received the deluge of congratulations showered upon him for having designed such a fine appearing craft—the first steel boat in the island service. The public was accorded the courtesies of the steamer during the evening, and, after darkness had settled, the electric plant was started on board and a large crowd assembled to witness the manipulation of the 14-inch search-light from the pilot house—the first equipment of this kind possessed by any of the island steamers.

The "Uncatena" was launched on June 25th, and was christened by Mrs. Chauncey G. Whiton, wife of the agent of the line and designer of the boat. The steamer's name was selected in honor of the island of Uncatena, one of the Elizabeth group. The boat was designed with reference to obtaining as much freight space as possible, yet reserving all the essentials of passenger convenience, and can actually stow away more than the much larger "Gay Head." The description of the "Uncatena," published at the time of her construction follows:

"In a general way, the Uncatena is not strikingly different from the other boats. Her shaft is hung low, so that it will be easy to pass over it in going the length of the craft, instead of stooping, as in some of the older boats. Her passenger gangway is aft of the



Steamer "Uncatena." Built in 1902. Length 187 feet. Beam 31 feet.



paddle boxes, and opens into a passenger hall, as in the other boats. This hall, however, is somewhat smaller than is customary. The purser's office, lunch room and men's toilet rooms are as in the other boats, and the large ladies' cabin is a feature of the new boat.

"Below the main deck aft are four staterooms for the petty officers, a large galley, a dining room 12x25 feet in size, a steward's stateroom and ample refrigerators and pantries. Forward are quarters for four coal passers and 10 deck hands. The upper deck is largely enclosed as in the other boats, save that forward and aft there are ample outer decks, covered; and railed with rope netting. One novel feature of the Uncatena's upper deck is a glass smoking room forward, so arranged as to be entered only from outside, thus insuring the freedom from smoke in the main cabin. On the upper deck are four outside staterooms, fitted in the most desirable manner for the convenience of guests.

"The hurricane deck is broken in the centre by a monitor roof over the cabin and will be railed with rope netting. Forward is the pilot house, and this extends aft far enough to provide two staterooms. That just aft of the pilot house is the captain's room, with a door opening directly into the pilot house—a very convenient arrangement. The stateroom has a berth, a desk and is fitted with a bowl and running water. The pilot's room, next aft the captain's, is similarly fitted, save for the desk. A private staircase connects the hurricane deck with the main saloon. The pilot house has ample windows, and, unlike the present boats, is not bothered by any mast in the centre carrying the heavy trusses necessary to a wooden boat.

"The new boat is a steel hull sidewheel steamer of the following dimensions: Length over all 187 feet, length on load water line 178 feet, beam of hull 31 feet, beam over guards, 54 feet, depth of hold 12 feet. She is fitted with four water-tight compartments to the requirements of the United States steamboat laws for ocean service. There is a steam steering gear, electric lights and searchlight, modern open plumbing throughout, and all possible conveniences for the service she is intended to run.

"The engine is a surface condensing beam engine with feathering wheels and a cylinder of 42 inches diameter by 10 feet stroke. The guaranteed speed is 15 statute miles per hour. There are two steel boilers of the flue and return tube type, measuring 8 feet 3 inches in diameter by 18 feet long. The steam pressure allowed by the United States inspectors is 60 pounds to the square 'nch."



## CHAPTER XV.

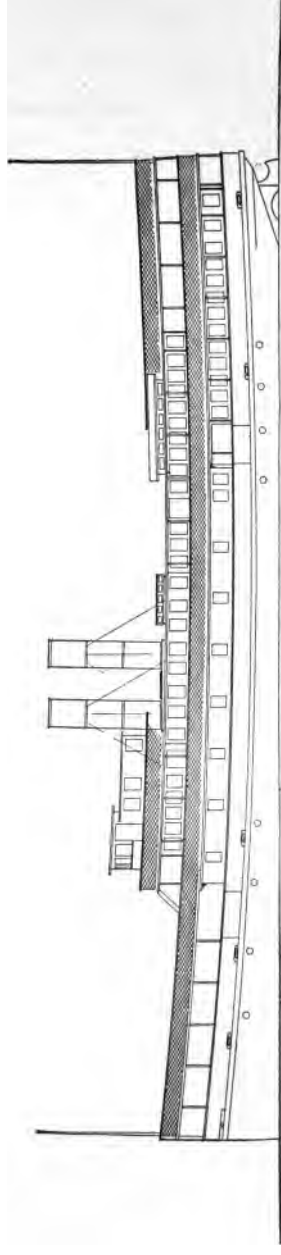
## THE NEW PROPELLER.

At the annual meeting of the company held in February, 1910, it was decided to build a new boat for the Nantucket route—a steel propeller—to be placed in service early in the year 1911. This action seems to be the culmination of the wishes of nine-tenths of the inhabitants of Nantucket for the last quarter of a century. A “propeller” has been talked about and written about, yet up to the present time the company could not see its way clear to have such a steamer built, although it was realized that such a craft would prove much more serviceable on the Nantucket route than the “side-wheelers.”

Consequently the vote passed at the annual meeting of 1910 marks another radical change in the island steamboat service, and after a lapse of ninety-two years since the first steamer ploughed her way across the waters of Nantucket sound, a steel “propeller” is now under construction, and in 1911 will be in service between Nantucket and Woods Hole and New Bedford. Although the name which the new boat will bear has not been definitely decided upon, it is assured she will be given a Nantucket name, which will be pleasing to Nantuckers, both far and near. The following description of the new boat was made public in advance of her construction, and was taken from the original specifications and drawings:

“The vessel will be a steel hull single screw steamer, 195 feet long, with beam at water line 31 feet, beam at main deck 36 feet, depth of hold 13 feet, draft at stern post 9 feet 6 inches, when afloat in still water with fifty tons freight, forty tons coal in bunkers, 3,000 gallons fresh water in tanks and all stores and equipment on board.

“The hull will be built with a bar keel, angle iron frames and reverse frames, and with the side plating above water line curved out to edge of guard, thus doing away with the ‘pounding’ common to boats with a flat overhanging guard like the side-wheel boats.



**THE NEW STEEL PROPELLER STEAMER.**  
Under construction for the Nantucket Route. Reproduced from the Original Drawing  
in the Possession of Agent Whiton.



There will be five water-tight steel bulkheads, dividing the boat into six compartments, and all the houses around the smoke stacks and fire-room openings will be of steel to and above the hurricane deck.

"In the hull forward of the collision bulkhead will be space for a water ballast, or trimming tank, and storage room. Between the collision bulkhead and bulkhead No. 2 will be the forecastle, with berths for twelve men. Between bulkhead No. 2 and bulkhead No. 3 will be a steerage or quarters for the petty officers, containing four staterooms, mate's locker and lamp room. This compartment will be entered by a stairway from main deck just aft of the main gangway.

"The boiler and engine will occupy the two compartments next aft of the steerage, and the compartment aft of the engine will contain the kitchen, crew's mess-room, officers' dining room, pantry, and steward's storeroom, all reached by a stairway down from main deck located under the main stairway, as in the 'Uncatena.'

"On the main deck there will be a forward stairway to the upper deck, located as in the other boats. Amidships will be the enclosure around the boiler and engine, and with these exceptions the whole main deck as far aft as the purser's office will be wholly given over to freight accommodation. There being no paddle-boxes, there will be no 'broken stowing,' and it will therefore be possible to carry as much freight as a side-wheeler on somewhat less deck area, as it will not be necessary to allow space for shaft, wheel doors, or closet entrances.

"The after end of the main deck will be arranged as follows:—A lobby or social hall will occupy the same relative position as in the old boats, having on the starboard side forward the purser's office, and on the port side the baggage and mail room, with the main stairway in the centre and a sliding door out to the gangways on each side of the boat. Directly aft of the social hall will be the smoking room, with the men's lavatory and toilets in the extreme stern, and there will be a 'waist' or outside deck from the purser's office around the stern to the mail room, as on the sidewheel boats.

"On the upper deck, which will run clear forward to the stem, there will be a saloon with a large observation room forward of the smoke-stacks, with a tier of four staterooms on each side amidships. Aft of the staterooms will be a small space around the head of the main stairway, with doors out onto the deck on each side. On this upper deck aft of the stairway will be the ladies' parlor and toilet accommodations, the location being chosen so as to reduce to a minimum the motion and vibration due to the machinery or rough water. There will be an abundant outside space on this deck for use in fine weather and the hurricane deck will also be open for passenger use. On the latter deck will be located the pilot house and two officers' staterooms, with the life-boats and life-rafts stowed along the sides amidships.

"The boat will have an electric lighting plant with turbine generator and a search-light—about 150 lights in all. There will be com-

bined hand and steam steering gear of the Williamson type and all the plumbing will be of modern patterns. The entire boat is to be heated by steam, so that it will not be necessary to shut off any portion of the accommodations in the winter months, as is now done on the 'Nantucket.'

"The propelling machinery will be a triple expansion surface condensing engine having three cylinders of 17½, 27 and 44-inch diameters and 24-inch stroke. There will be piston valves on the high and intermediate cylinders and a double ported flat slide valve on the low pressure cylinder. All the auxiliary pumps will be independent of the main engine. There will be a vertical twin beam air pump, two vertical simplex feed pumps, one horizontal duplex donkey pump and a small duplex sanitary pump. The circulating pump will be an 8-inch centrifugal pump driven by a vertical steam engine.

"The screw propeller will be a solid cast iron wheel 8 feet 4 inches diameter and 12 feet pitch, and at normal speed the engine should turn this wheel from 135 to 140 revolutions per minute, corresponding to a speed of between fifteen and sixteen statute miles per hour.

"The boiler installation will consist of four Almy water tube boilers, type 'E,' having a total grate surface of 160 square feet and a total heating surface of 6,250 square feet, and working pressure of 200 pounds per square inch. The boilers are intended to work at natural draft and it is not intended to fit forced draft apparatus at this time. There will be two smoke stacks, one for each pair of boilers, arranged fore and aft with a light and air trunk down between the stacks directly over the fire-room floor."

All the requirements of the steamboat inspectors as to fire protection and life-saving apparatus will be completely provided for, and all the materials and workmanship entering into the construction of the vessel will be of the very best. It is not intended to get up a "showy" boat, but a plain, substantial business boat that will stand hard knocks and rough service. To this end, strength and reliability, with good sea-going qualities, are the chief considerations that must be kept always in mind, and in getting out the plans and specifications, Mr. Whiton has been governed by those special conditions of the service on this route that are entirely different from the conditions on other routes where boats of this type are now in use.

#### POPULAR OFFICERS OF THE ISLAND STEAMERS.

Since 1901 the "Nantucket" has been under command of Capt. Charles H. Furber, a young man of Vineyard birth, but a "Nantucketer by adoption," who has proved a "second Cap-



Capt. Charles H. Furber,  
of Steamer Nantucket.



tain Manter," both in efficiency and popularity. Captain Furber entered the employ of the steamboat company as quartermaster in 1885—a young man but seventeen years of age—and in 1898 was placed in command of steamer "Marthas Vineyard" (then running as an excursion boat) having won a captaincy in thirteen years. He has been in command of the "Nantucket" nine years and the greater part of his service has been on the Nantucket route.

One of the most popular officers on the island steamers is Pilot Owen S. Manter, who has been in the employ of the steamboat company about twenty years. "Owen S." is a native of Nantucket—a relative of the renowned Capt. Nathan Manter, and his long term of service on the island steamers has made him well-known to the travelling public, as well as to the residents of Nantucket. He entered the company's employ as quartermaster on steamer "Island Home" with Captain Fishback, in the early 90's, and in 1892 went on the "Gay Head" as quartermaster with Captain Daggett, continuing in the company's employ up to the present time. He holds a license as master for the inland waters of the Atlantic coast and also as a first-class pilot for the waters between Nantucket and Point Judith.

Purser William A. Smith, of the "Nantucket," is also a well-known employee of the company, having been in service on the steamers continuously since 1897, and several years before that during the summer months, as assistant purser, and with the summer patrons of the line Smith is especially popular.

The man who has the most number of years of service on the island steamers to his credit is John P. Smith, the mate of steamer "Uncatena," whose familiar face and form are well known. Not only is he the oldest employee of the local steamboat company, but he is one of the oldest in point of actual service on any of the New England steamship lines, having been in active employment with this company since 1871, when he was one of the complement of men sent to New York to bring the steamer "River Queen" to New Bedford.

Although Mate Smith, of steamer "Uncatena," can boast



of nearly forty years' service on the island route, Purser Ripley of the same boat can claim a service almost as long, for he has been in the company's employ about thirty-four years, but not all continuous, as during the early part of his service he was employed during the summer months only. Captain Marshall of the same steamer has been on the Vineyard route twenty-five years, having command of the "Marthas Vineyard" and the "Monohansett" until the construction of the "Unca-tena," when he was given command of the new boat.

Nantucket has had a number of famous captains at the helms of her various steamboats—among them being Edward H. Barker, James H. Barker, Lot Phinney, Benjamin C. Cromwell, B. C. Chase, Alexander H. Robinson, Thomas Brown, Nathan Manter and George H. Brock, all of whom have long since dropped anchor at the end of life's voyage. Since the retirement of Captain Manter in 1890, the following captains have served on the Nantucket route: Aquilla P. Bartow (now captain of the U. S. steamer Mayflower), Charles H. Fishback, G. Justin Hart, F. J. Marshall, Charles H. Furber, Charles H. Coulter and J. W. Merriman. During the summer months from about 1887 on, Capt. G. L. Daggett ran the morning boat out of Nantucket (the "Gay Head") to New Bedford, and Capt. F. J. Marshall ran the noon boat, the latter succeeding Captain George G. Fisher, who had command of the noon boat to Nantucket for two seasons.

The present board of directors of the Steamboat Company consists of E. T. Pierce, Wm. W. Crapo, T. E. Byrnes, F. S. Curtis, Benjamin C. Cromwell, D. L. Parker and Alanson S. Barney. Chauncey G. Whiton is treasurer and agent of the company.

Photo by Boyer.



Owen S. Manter.  
Pilot on Island Steamers.





**Mate John P. Smith. Employed on  
Island Steamers since 1871.**





Purser Ripley of Steamer "Uncatena."



## CHAPTER XVI.

## FIRST AND ONLY STEAMER BUILT AT NANTUCKET.

In drawing to a close this history of Nantucket steamboats, the fact should be mentioned, among the other items of interest, that in the year 1876 the first and only steamer ever constructed on the island was placed in service by two of Nantucket's enterprising and skillful young mechanics—William F. Codd (the present superintendent of the Wannacomet Water Company) and the late William M. Robinson. This craft was the little steamer "Island Belle," which the young men built during the winter and spring of that year in the shop of Charles H. Robinson, which stood on Fair street, and when the boat was ready for launching she was given a triumphant ride through the streets of the town on her way to the water front, bedecked with bunting and flags, the event arousing considerable interest among the islanders.

The "Island Belle" was 36 feet long and made her first trip in Nantucket harbor on the 17th of July, 1876, which event was chronicled in the following terms:

"The work of connecting the engine and boiler of the steam launch Island Belle was completed last Saturday, and late in the afternoon of that day, her shrill whistle announced to the public the fact that steam had been gotten up. Many went to the wharves to witness her as she passed out of the dock—it having been previously whispered that she would make a trial trip in the harbor. They were not doomed to be disappointed, and had the pleasure of watching the attractive little vessel glide about with the ease and grace of a swan. The proprietors and builders were justly elated with the successful issue of their first sail, and were greeted with applause from many interested spectators, on arriving at the dock.

The new machinery worked rather stiffly, and the gentle-



men saw a few minor points to be altered. They have made numerous trips during the week, and on Wednesday last went up harbor for a little sail, and had the misfortune to get aground on one of the numerous shoals, which was occasioned by attempting to find the narrow channel which runs over the shoal. Here they laid until about half-past eight in the evening, when they floated just in time to take the warp of the Lillian, which was becalmed near them with half a hundred passengers, and tow her to the dock. But the most successful trip, according to the statement of the proprietors, was that of Thursday afternoon, when she steamed out back of the bar and circled about the yacht 'Palmer,' which was anchored a short distance beyond it. A reporter of this paper accepted the invitation of the owners to go, and had a good opportunity to witness the working of the little steamer. The machinery had become sufficiently worn to allow it to work smoothly, and with sixty-five pounds of steam, the boat moved away from her berth. The pressure of steam was increased but very little on the passage out, the engine making one hundred revolutions per minute. The southwest wind had freshened considerably by the time the bar boat was reached, but the boat made easy work, rolling but very little even hauled up on the wind, though there was quite a swell at the time.

On the return the steam was increased to nearly eighty pounds, the shaft making as high as one hundred and fifteen and not lower than one hundred and three revolutions per minute, and moved rapidly against a strong head wind and tide. The speed attained was eight miles per hour.

Messrs. Robinson and Codd have just cause for being proud of their undertaking, for she has proved to be much better in many respects than they had anticipated."

The accompanying illustration was taken from a photograph in the possession of Mr. Codd, and shows the "Island Belle" as she appeared when ready for service, with the young men who built her standing on her deck. The steamer entered upon a regular schedule between Nantucket and Wauwinet on Monday, the 24th of July, making three round trips daily, having her berth on the north side of Steamboat wharf,



The Steamer 'Island Belle.' Built in Nantucket in 1876. Length 36 feet.





Remains of Steamer "Coskata" ("Island Belle") on the  
South Beach, Nantucket Harbor.



near the restaurant building. She could accommodate about sixty passengers and proved herself well adapted for this service.

Some years afterwards the "Island Belle" was sold to Cape parties, and later bought back again by Nantucketers, being rebuilt, her size increased, her name changed to "Coskata," and for a number of seasons she was operated successfully as a ferry between the town and Coatie and Wauwinet. Her hull now rests down on the south beach, where it has been ravaged by the elements for a number of years, and is slowly falling into decay, the second illustration giving a good view of the steamer in her present condition.

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Two other little steamers have been operated on the route between Nantucket and Wauwinet—a sidewheel craft named the "Edith," and a propeller called the "Wauwinet." The "Edith" was brought to the island on the 20th of June, 1877, by our present fellow townsman, John W. Macy, and operated as a passenger boat. This project was not a financial success and the "Edith" was sold. The "Wauwinet" was operated in the summer of 1890 under command of Capt. C. E. Smalley, but was also a financial failure. The Wauwinet route has also had numerous naphtha and gasoline launches in service, but the "Coskata" was actually the last steamboat operated there.

In 1890 a small steamer called the "Ocean Queen" was brought to Nantucket by Marcus W. Dunham, having been built at Boston for use as a fishing boat. She was 59.5 feet long, 12.5 feet beam, with 5 feet depth of hold. Her arrival at Nantucket was on the 17th of June, and the following day she made a trip to Tuckernuck island, taking the members of the school board along as guests. A few months after her arrival she was placed in service as an excursion steamer, and made trips to Tuckernuck, the Vineyard, around the island, out to South Shoals light vessel, etc., with pleasure parties, being a speedy boat, capable of maintaining eleven knots an hour. As an excursion steamer

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\*The "Wauwinet" some years afterwards was in service on Eagle Lake, N. H., near Mount Washington.

she was commanded by Captain Foist, with Wallace Gardner as engineer, and became quite prominent at the time when President Harrison visited Nantucket on the cruiser "Baltimore," in the summer of 1890, making many passages back and forth between the wharf and the government vessel. The "Ocean Queen" is still in service, being used as a tender in the harbor of Portland, Me.

### THE LITTLE FISHING STEAMERS.

Nantucket also has two staunch little steamers employed in its fishing industry—the "Petrel" and the "Waquoit"—which have been prominent in the island waters for a number of years, and have upon several occasions done good service in connection with wrecks and stranded vessels. Thousands upon thousands of dollars have been brought into Nantucket by means of these steamers, year after year, both boats engaging in trap fishing from the early spring until the late autumn.

The "Petrel" was built at Boston during the winter of 1895-6, expressly for the Nantucket service, four enterprising fishermen—Arthur J. Barrett, Arthur C. Manter, William M. Bartlett and James E. Smith—uniting in the venture. The steamer was constructed for rough usage and has proved herself a most able craft. She is of 22 tons, 49.5 feet long and 13 feet beam, has a 60 horse-power boiler and a 48-horse-power engine, and arrived at Nantucket for the first time on Tuesday, January 14, 1896. Her first engineer was John J. Gardner, but for about thirteen years Charles S. Vincent has served in that capacity.

The "Waquoit" was formerly a pleasure boat, was built at Boston in 1887, is 52.4 feet long and 11 feet beam. She was purchased in the fall of 1900 by Herbert P. Smith, a young Nantucketer, who had her remodelled somewhat in order to accommodate the craft to the fishing business, and brought her to Nantucket on the 12th of October of that year. Captain Smith ran the steamer successfully for several seasons, and then sold it to a company of the island fishermen (composed of Jesse H. Eldredge, Manuel Thomas, Manuel Sylvia and Harry L. Cook), who a year or two after sold her to the present



Steamer "Petrel." Built in 1896. Length 49.5 feet. Beam 13 feet.





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Steamer "Waquoit." Built in 1887. Length 52.4 feet. Beam 11 feet.



owners—Andrew T. Backus and Arthur McCleave. Both the "Petrel" and the "Waquoit" are still in active service in the island fisheries.

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In the foregoing pages the writer has endeavored to cover the main facts connected with the island steam service from its inception with the little "Eagle" in 1818, up to the present time, when the new steel propeller is under construction—a period of ninety-two years, during which steamers have plied back and forth across the sound, meeting with some decidedly rough and very exciting experiences, yet in all those years not a single serious accident has resulted—certainly a rather remarkable record. During this long period Nantucket has witnessed a series of "ups and downs," has had its waves of prosperity and adversity, and has passed from being the leading whaling port of the world to the obscurity of a community which has seen its life-blood pass away with the decline of that industry, but which for three decades has been gradually emerging from that obscurity into a new world in which the name of Nantucket, as a prosperous and growing health and summer resort, is becoming as famous as was the name of Nantucket when the island was sending its whale-ships and its sturdy sons to every quarter of the globe.

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During the ninety-two years of steamboating across Nantucket sound, there have been only three accidents in which loss of life has resulted. A boat fell from a davit on the "Monohansett" and struck a man sitting on the deck below, causing injuries from which he died. In 1875 a forward gang-way on the "River Queen" was accidentally left unfastened, and a man leaning against it fell overboard and was struck and killed by the steamer's paddle-wheel. On the 25th of July, 1890, John Powers, assistant engineer of steamer "Marthas Vineyard," was crushed to death in the crank-pit, just after the boat left the wharf at Nantucket.

The worst mishap to a steamer occurred on the 29th of July, 1898, when the "Gay Head" and "Nantucket" collided with each other while crossing Vineyard sound in a dense fog, the latter's bow being quite badly injured by the accident.

## RECORD OF NANTUCKET'S "FREEZE-UPS."

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The accompanying record of Nantucket's "freeze-ups" is as nearly complete as it is possible to make it by reference to newspaper files and private diaries. Prior to 1856 (the first winter the steamer "Island Home" was in service) the local press gave only a bare statement of facts as to whether the harbor was "closed" or "open," and consequently the data bearing on ice embargoes between the years 1818 and 1856 is very meagre. The record, as it appears herewith, covers all of the extended periods of isolation experienced at Nantucket from 1856 to 1910, and is practically authentic.

1818-19.

This winter was very mild, and only one light fall of snow was seen on the island from December to March. The harbor was not closed by ice.

1826-27.

This was noted as a "long winter," cold weather setting in the last week in November and lasting well into March.

1829-30.

Very cold during January and February, with the harbor closed.

1833.

The harbor was closed to commerce from January 3 to March 12, the mails being landed three times during that period of isolation, by the packets.

1834-35.

Known as another mild winter. Steamer "Telegraph" made several trips across the sound. Very little ice.

1835-36.

A hard winter, Nantucket being surrounded by ice the greater part of the time. On the 6th of February no water

was in sight. Sloop Barclay, Capt. Henry Macy, was caught in the ice three miles in back of the bar, and people passed to and fro drawing sleighs, and by this means discharged her cargo.

1836-37.

Harbor frozen over nearly all winter. Sloop Silas Parker, Capt. Abraham Macy, sailed from outside Brant point on the 2d of January with twenty passengers, among whom were the town's representatives.

Schooner Exact, Captain Potter, arrived at Brant point from Baltimore, on January 6th, and during the night was carried by the ice into the upper harbor, where she was imprisoned until February 23. Horses and carts were driven over the ice to the schooner and took out the flour and corn, carrying it four miles over the ice to town. There was a shortage of grain and a few lines of provisions that winter.

The mail packet sailed February 8th for the first time in forty days. Steamer "Telegraph" arrived at Nantucket on February 25th for the first time since Christmas. An old diary bears the following comments upon the winter's slege:

"The harbor was closed for seven weeks, in the year 1837. No mail left the island during that time. One or two mails from the continent were landed at Great Point, and brought to town. There was some trouble apprehended to our ships at sea. I do not know the cause. Some negotiations going on between France and our country, or some other country, made the people very anxious to hear from abroad. It was very near the close of General Jackson's second term as President. When at last communication was opened, the mails arrived before noon. They caused great rejoicing. The bells were rung, flags raised, and all spoke with eagerness of the 'good news.' I was then assistant in the boy's department of the Coffin school. Hon. William H. Wood, late Judge of Probate of Plymouth County, was the principal. The boys brought to school in the afternoon little white paper flags, with 'Peace' written on them, which they stuck in their desks. They were so wild with excitement that Mr. Wood judiciously gave them a half holiday. I remember the date, as it was the last year of my teaching. It was this year that Lake Michigan was frozen over."

1839-40.

Island surrounded by ice the last week in January. Temperature dropped to 6 below zero on the 25th. Two lighters from Edgartown with oil from ship Zenas Coffin were frozen in the ice beyond the bar. A sloop from Connecticut was also in the ice for several weeks, and 125 pigs and several cows were driven ashore to the north beach, the sloop's cargo being wholly "live-stock." Some of the oil from the Bolivar was also brought ashore over the ice on sleds, as the vessel was leaking badly.

1843.

Harbor closed on February 8th, and four vessels were imprisoned in the ice. Island isolated about a week. In March the harbor was again filled with ice and on the 7th men travelled over the ice to the wreck of ship Joseph Starbuck, near the bar. Steamer "Telegraph" got out of the harbor on the 11th.

1844.

Open winter until January 26th, when the harbor closed and island was isolated until February 21. On the 8th of February the "Telegraph" attempted to break out, but was unsuccessful. On the 9th a sloop landed eleven days' mails and two passengers on Great point.

1846.

A freeze-up lasted eight days in February.

1847.

No ice during the winter to prevent the sailing of sloops and steamers, and the two following winters were also mild.

1851-52.

The harbor was closed for five weeks, and the winter was very severe. Mails were landed on Great point on January 25th and two days later the steamer made her way out through the ice to clear water.

1855.

Steamers "Massachusetts" and "Eagle's Wing" were both frozen in the harbor this winter, but were able to resume their trips the middle of February.

## 1856.

The ice embargo of this year extended over a period from January 4 to February 23d. There were several interruptions, when communication was held with the outside world via steamer Island Home from Hyannis. The first period was between the 4th and 11th, then from the 25th to February 5th, on which latter date eight days' mails and fifteen passengers were landed at Quidnet. On the 6th twenty-two sleighs were out on the harbor at one time. On the 9th of February the steamer effected a landing at Great Point. It was snowing at the time, and the townspeople did not know of her coming. The mails and passengers were taken to Polpis in carts by farmers, and then Charles F. Brown rode to Nantucket on horseback and apprised the astonished citizens of what had been doing. On the 12th the boat reached her pier here, sailing next day, it taking her twenty-three hours to reach Hyannis. She did not return until the 23d, when the harbor was freer of ice than for many weeks.

## 1857.

January of this year chronicled the longest period of isolation on record, the harbor filling up with ice during the last two weeks of December and finally closing completely on the night of January 5. Steamer Island Home was unable to move from her berth the following morning and it was not until Wednesday, the 21st, that any attempt was made to break out of the ice. The plan of blowing up the ice was resorted to, but was unsuccessful on account of the extreme thickness, in some places being over ten feet thick. It was then determined to saw a passage thorough the ice to Brant point the following day, and a large gang of men were engaged for the work, but a heavy snow storm prevented. The plan was to saw two cuts the width of steamer Island Home apart and then blow up the ice between, the expense to be defrayed by voluntary subscription, and but for the severe storm the scheme might have proved successful.

On the afternoon of January 21, steamer New York, from Glasgow, anchored off Squam Head and set signals for assistance. A whale-boat was sent out to her from shore and it was found that the steamer's supply of coal had nearly given out, owing to an unusually long and stormy passage across the ocean. The



whale-boat brought ashore news from the mainland which had been received in Europe before the departure of the steamer for America, and it was the first information from the outside world that Nantucketers had received since January 5. The New York remained off Quidnet until the following Saturday, but as no favorable opportunity had been presented for putting coal aboard up to that time, she was taken around off 'Sconset in the afternoon. Ice, however, formed in between the vessel and the shore and it was not until Tuesday that another attempt was made to board her. The following day a large gang of men and teams were put at work transporting coal from town to the beach at 'Sconset, and it was estimated that at least 1,000 tons of snow had to be removed from the roads in order to allow the coal teams to pass. Coal was placed in bags and carried out to the steamer in boats—a total of 115 tons being placed on board, which amount was sufficient for the steamer to reach New York. Three boats, containing twenty men and five tons of coal, drifted with the tide nearly three miles from the ship, and it was only by great exertion that the men reached shore, where the boats were towed back to the starting point with horses.

On Tuesday, February 3, the little schooner Pizarro, of Hyannis, Capt. Chase, anchored off Quidnet and sent a boat ashore with about thirty passengers and mails, which had been accumulating for twenty-eight days. A thaw set in on the 4th, and aided by a strong southerly wind, steamer Island Home forced her way out of the harbor on the afternoon of the 6th, the isolation having lasted just thirty-one days. Steamer Eagle's Wing was frozen into Edgartown harbor this winter for nearly six weeks.

#### 1859-60.

The winter developed no protracted freeze-up, but there was much ice, which caused frequent interruptions of communication between this island and the mainland.

On December 29, 1859, the boat got out, returning on the 31st with three days' mails, being two hours getting through the ice. She got out again February 2d, returning the 4th as far as Brant point, where mails were transferred and she proceeded to Hyannis. On the 7th she came through to the dock.

1864.

After a severe northeast snowstorm of several days' duration, and a subsequent cold wave on January 28, the steamer made a three hours' battle with the ice near Brant point in an attempt to get out, but damaged her paddle-wheels so badly that it was necessary to return to the dock for repairs, which required several days.

On February 2, Capt. Roland Gardner started from Hyannis in U. S. schooner Ranger, to go to Pollock Rip lightship, but the ice took the schooner out of her course and he landed a boat on Great point, delivering a few Boston papers to be sent to town for the benefit of the islanders.

Steamer Island Home made an attempt to break through the ice on the 14th, but failed. Two days later, however, she succeeded in getting through to Hyannis, but grounded on Coatue flats on her return trip, where she remained until 5 o'clock the following morning. The mails were taken off during the evening by Alexander B. Dunham, who went out to the steamer in a dory.

1865.

On January 28, steamer Island Home was three hours getting out of the harbor, but returned that day, and was frozen in here until February 8th, when she again got clear and brought back nine days' mails. During the period the harbor was a veritable skating park, a rain that occurred freezing on the surface, making excellent skating, and the sport was entered into by old and young. On the 11th of February another cold snap sealed the harbor, and the second freeze-up lasted until the 15th.

1867.

Nantucket harbor was closed by ice on January 12th. Steamer Island Home forced her way out on the 15th and reached Hyannis, returning late the same day. Heavy storms followed by cold wave kept the island isolated the remainder of the month, the steamer breaking out on February 1st, when a thaw set in. During the freeze-up the harbor was a busy scene, as its surface was like glass, and there was skating and ice-boating for over a week continuous. Ice twelve inches in thickness was harvested on some of the ponds.

1868.

During this winter the island was obliged to depend on the service afforded by the sloops Tawtemeo and Pizarro the greater part of the time, for in February the steamer's boiler was out of order, and the company did not have her in service for several weeks. On the 9th of January a period of isolation commenced and the steamer was not able to again reach Nantucket until the 28th, when she landed mails at Brant point. The harbor was open on the 4th of February, but the fact that the Island Home was then unfit for service caused the company to arrange with the sloop Pizarro to transport mails to and from Hyannis. The inner harbor filled with ice again, and the Tawtemeo and Pizarro made landings at Brant point upon every trip. On the 12th of March the Island Home sailed for New Bedford, to undergo repairs, and was not in commission again until the 20th.

1871.

The harbor had been filled with ice all winter, but there had been no severe storms to interrupt the passage of the steamer and the channel was kept open until Thursday, February 2, when it closed up completely. The following Sunday morning steamer Island Home tried to get out, but got stuck in the ice near Brant point and was obliged to remain there until Tuesday afternoon, when she gave up the attempt and worked her way back to the wharf. Another effort was made the next day, but it was not until Saturday, the 11th, that she finally got clear of the ice, and returned with eight mails.

1872.

After an open harbor up to the first of March, steamer Island Home became jammed in the ice on the 2d, just after she rounded Brant point, and was unable to reach the wharf, remaining out in the harbor all night, during a fierce blizzard. She reached the dock at 8.30 Sunday morning, and was able to make a round trip the following day, but on Tuesday was frozen solid at her berth. The island was without communication from the continent until the 9th, when steamer Verbena effected a landing at Great point. A thaw set in on the 11th and the Island Home made a trip to Hyannis and return. Another cold wave followed, and it was not until Thursday, March 14th, that the boat made

an attempt to break out. After four hours' battle with the ice she succeeded in reaching open water and went over to Hyannis, returning to Nantucket in the afternoon. For the second time within a fortnight the Island Home became jammed in the ice after she rounded Brant point, and was held there all night, reaching her dock at 6 o'clock Friday morning. On Sunday she made an unsuccessful attempt to make her way out, and butted the ice inside of Brant point until 10 o'clock in the evening, at which hour she returned to her berth.

The next day, March 18th, the Verbena ran into the ice on the north side of the island, but could not get near enough to land there, so went around to Quidnet, where she landed five days' mails. On Tuesday the Island Home was able to make a trip to Hyannis and return, but Wednesday morning dawned with the temperature at 10 above zero and the harbor again closed. Thursday she made an unsuccessful attempt to get out, the next day succeeded in reaching Hyannis, returning to Nantucket on Saturday, the 23d, after which date the ice commenced to disappear. Such a long period of isolation (twenty-two days) in March, was said to be without a parallel, for the steamer had made but four trips to the continent during that time. On the 25th the Island Home towed the sloop Tawtemeo out, which was the first sailing vessel to leave port since February 14.

#### 1873.

This was not one of the severe winters. The boat had sailed on Christmas day, December 25th, and it was a week (January 2) before she again held communication with the island, landing mails and passengers at Quidnet. The next day the weather conditions had freed the bay of ice, and the Island Home reached her pier after some effort. There was another period from February 23d to March 9th that ice interrupted communication. The Monohansett came down to Brant point, March 2d, landing passengers and mails, the Island Home being off the route for repairs, sloop Tawtemeo being on the local route. The Island Home resumed her place on the 9th of March.

#### 1875.

January of this year witnessed a long period of isolation, which nearly equalled that of 1857. On Wednesday, the 18th,

the steamer managed to force her way out of the harbor, but did not attempt to return until a week later, when she met with so much ice in the sound that she put back to Hyannis. The next day U. S. steamer Verbena anchored off Quidnet on her return passage from the South Shoals lightship, landing Capt. Calvin Hamblen, C. M. Barrows, principal of the High school, Franklin Nickerson and two other passengers.

The following Saturday steamer Island Home came down and reconnoitered, but accomplished nothing. A like manoeuvre was made the next day, but on Monday the steamer succeeded in reaching Brant point, landing eight mails. An attempt to blow up the ice in the harbor was made the following day, but nothing was accomplished thereby.

On Sunday, January 31, the steamer made another unsuccessful attempt to enter the harbor, and a large force of men was at work cutting and sawing the ice, as it was thought practicable to clear a passage and send out the steamer River Queen, which had been lying at the dock all winter. A heavy snowstorm set in and stopped further work in this direction. Two days later, the Island Home landed seven days' mails at Quidnet, together with a few passengers and a small amount of expressage. On Wednesday, February 3, after several hours' battle with the ice, the steamer succeeded in reaching the dock, having been absent since January 16.

The following Saturday, on her return passage, the steamer grounded on the bar, and did not float until 11 p. m. A heavy snow storm set in that night with an extreme cold wave, the thermometer registering 8 degrees below zero Monday night, and the harbor was again closed with ice. On Friday, the 26th, the steamer forced her way around Brant point for the first time in twenty days. A large force of volunteers had been at work for several days previous and succeeded in cutting out a channel from the dock to the point, and the steamer went out and loosened up the ice Wednesday night. A thick fog shut in the next day and no attempt was made to get out to clear water until Friday, when the steamer experienced but little difficulty. The harbor at Woods Hole had been closed up by the southerly wind, and it required several hours' battle with the ice before



Steamer 'Petrel' Landing a Full Fare of Fish at Commercial Wharf.  
Photo by Boyer.

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the steamer could enter. She did not return to Nantucket until Saturday, when eighteen mails were brought, the largest number landed at one time since 1857.

1877.

There was only a slight interruption by wintry conditions—a period of one week from January 1st to the 8th.

1879-80.

This winter was an unusually mild one, with very few storms and no extended period of cold weather. From the middle of December to the 31st day of March the steamer made her regular trips to the mainland with only one interruption.

1881.

On January 26th of this year steamer Island Home sailed for Woods Hole. Cold, boisterous weather prevented her return, and the harbor rapidly filled with ice, then the outer bay and sound. On the 29th the boat ran down, hoping to effect a landing, but the ice she encountered was too heavy, and she turned back, only to meet another heavy floe. With a short supply of coal, it was realized that she could not make the Vineyard, and the only thing left to be done was to force her into the ice as near the bar as practicable, which was done, and she lay about a mile and a half back of the bar until February 10th. The cold continued unabated, and a supply of coal was sent over the ice by horse and sled, together with provisions. Several beef cattle she had on board were put on the ice and driven ashore. On the 5th of February, U. S. steamer Verbena landed mails and passengers at Great Point. On the 8th the Monohansett effected another landing at Great Point. On the 10th, as above noted, the imprisoned Island Home was freed, and made her way back to Woods Hole.

1885.

After seven days of stormy weather, during which time the harbor closed with ice, the steamer made an attempt to force her way out on Saturday, February 7th, about nine o'clock, and ran into clear water at 1.30 in the afternoon. Meanwhile the U. S. steamer Verbena had landed the mails on Great Point. The Island Home returned to Nantucket two days later, but another cold wave and heavy northeast snow storm closed up



the harbor again and the steamer did not break her way out until the 16th, returning to Nantucket the next day. On Sunday, the 22d, the Monohansett attempted to reach Great Point, but was unable to do so and returned to Woods Hole, but on Tuesday the steamer worked her way around off Quidnet and landed the mails and four passengers. On Saturday, the 28th, steamer Island Home renewed efforts to break out, but returned to the dock in the afternoon. Early Sunday morning another attempt was made, which was successful. Meantime the Monohansett came down to Great Point and the two steamers transferred mails and passengers. The next Tuesday the regular trips between Nantucket and the mainland were resumed.

1886.

After comparatively mild weather through December, January and February, the island experienced a severe cold wave, lasting nearly to the middle of March. The Island Home made her trip to Nantucket on February 25th, but a heavy northwest storm lasting several days, set in that night, and she made no attempt to leave the island until Sunday, the 28th. The storm was followed by a severe cold wave and the mercury registered 2 degrees above zero when the steamer left, the harbor being covered with ice. No effort was made to reach the island until the following Thursday, when the steamer came down as far as Great Point, but found the ice so heavy that no landing could be made, returning to Woods Hole. The next day the mails were taken over to Quidnet, where the Norcross Brothers put out with them in a dory and intercepted the U. S. steamer Verbena as she was bound in from a trip to the South Shoals lightship, placing the mails aboard after a hard row. Saturday the Island Home landed mails and provisions at the east end, and the next Monday forced her way into the harbor after an all day's struggle with the ice, and reached her dock. She made her way out again Tuesday morning and on Wednesday endeavored to again reach her berth, but was unsuccessful, and landed at Great Point, near the life-saving station. She had so many passengers on board that there were not teams enough to bring them to town, and eight persons were obliged to remain at the station over night. The boat did not reach her pier again until Saturday, March 13th.

1888.

The steamer left here January 20th, finding difficulty in making her way out. She got into clear water about 9.30 a. m. The weather continued cold, touching the zero point on the 22d. On February 2d the Island Home left Woods Hole heavily loaded with freight, and with thirteen days' mails and a few passengers, several declining to venture on the trip. Skirting down the ice in the sound, no opening appeared permitting landing in the chord of the bay, and Great Point was rounded. Anchor was cast off the "Galls" and the mails and passengers transferred to shore in a dory, amid floating ice. On the 5th the boat finally reached the dock. The record speaks of it as the coldest twenty days of the last half century. Ice was 15 to 18 inches thick on the harbor, and sleighing was excellent all over the island.

1893.

January 11th steamer Nantucket started out in the teeth of a howling gale, to escape being caught here in the ice. On the 19th she made an unsuccessful attempt to reach the island. Passengers and mails forwarded to Great Point to meet her, had to return. There was no open water around the shores, even as far as Low Beach, and sleighing was fine. On the 22d the boat steamed through heavy fields of ice around Great Point to Quidnet, where she lay 45 minutes transferring mails and passengers. On the 28th she effected another landing at Coskata. On February 1st she reached her dock, having been frozen out since January 11th. February 14th the harbor was free from ice—the first time in six weeks.

1895.

The last departure of the boat before the freeze-up was February 4th. On the 7th, after a vain attempt to reach the bar, three days' mails and two passengers were landed at Great Point. On the 8th occurred one of the worst blizzards known, with the thermometer registering 5 degrees above. On the 12th, the Island Home made an unsuccessful attempt to reach Nantucket. On the 14th she succeeded, with the aid of the Coskata life-saving crew, in landing mails on Great Point, but it was so rough no passengers made the attempt to land. The boat lost an anchor on this occasion. She reached her dock here at 12.15 p. m., on the 17th.

1899.

After some trying trips, steamer Nantucket was frozen in here February 9. On the 17th steamer Monohansett ran down to the jetty, and transferred mails to a dory on the ice. On the 20th the Nantucket started to break her way out, and after nearly five hours' hard service, went clear. On the 23d, the harbor was practically free from ice.

1901.

February 8—Steamer Nantucket sailed, having been detained here several days by boisterous weather. On the 9th, ice had formed, and she was nearly an hour getting out clear, but returned that day. On the 11th greater difficulty was experienced in forcing through the ice to clear water. She did not return until the 18th, when she reached her dock at 1.10 p. m., with six days' mail's. Trips were more or less interrupted until the 26th, when the ice had practically disappeared—the first time the harbor had been free in three weeks.

1904.

The winter of 1904, from January 4 to February 26, was notable for the fact that three distinct periods of isolation occurred between those dates, of nine, five and seventeen days' duration, respectively, the island being without steamboat communication with the continent for 31 days out of 55—an unusual occurrence. Steamer Nantucket left the island on Monday, January 4th, after a week of frigidty which had packed the harbor with ice. Although the weather was boisterous that morning, Captain Furber realized that a freeze-up was threatening, and, rather than be frozen inside the harbor, decided to make an effort to break out to clear water. The steamer butted the ice for nearly two hours before gaining exit and made her way to Woods Hole in the teeth of a fierce gale, with the temperature hovering about the zero point. No attempt was made to reach the island until Sunday, the 10th, when the steamer ran down into the ice at the bar, but was unable to make a landing and returned.

Monday afternoon, the little fishing steamer Waquoit, which left Nantucket on the 21st of December to tow the schooner William P. Boggs across from Woods Hole with a cargo of grain, made her way down to Eel point and landed a half dozen pas-

sengers and a supply of provisions, but brought no mail or papers. On Wednesday, the 13th, steamer Nantucket succeeded in reaching the wharf, after an hour's battle with the ice inside of Brant point. After landing the passengers and mail, Captain Furber made a few turns about the harbor to break out the ice and then returned to the dock for the night. The steamer was able to make a round trip on Thursday, and the harbor was kept open until the following Tuesday, the 19th, when the second period of isolation commenced.

When the boat came in Monday afternoon, everything pointed to another embargo, and but for the long time consumed in discharging freight, Captain Furber would have started back for Woods Hole that night. Tuesday afternoon the Nantucket succeeded in breaking out, and did not reach Nantucket again until Sunday, the 24th, when the steamer Waquoit and the schooner Boggs entered the harbor in her wake. It was during the first period of isolation that a channel was sawed through the ice to Crosby's wharf in order that schooner E. Waterman might discharge her cargo.

On the 28th of January of this year, two young Nantucket men narrowly escaped death in the ice fields. Louis McGarvey and Alonzo Chase, on learning that Nantucket harbor was again open, started from the Vineyard in a small catboat. They became imprisoned in the drift ice in crossing the sound, and were rescued late in the evening by a volunteer crew who went out on steamer Petrel and brought them in from a precarious position off Eel point.

Nantucket harbor remained open until February 9th, when a third period of isolation commenced. That night the temperature fell to 2 above zero and Wednesday morning dawned with no water in sight to the northward of the island. Steamer Nantucket battled with the ice all day long and reached a point near the jetties at dusk, but Captain Furber deemed it imprudent to continue the effort to reach open water that night and returned to port at 8.30, having made a gallant but unsuccessful fight against the heavy ice field. The boat remained a prisoner in the harbor until the 15th, when she was able to reach Woods Hole. Not until the 23d did she again make her way into the ice at

Nantucket, at which time she brought one passenger, seventy-eight newspaper sacks and twenty-three letter pouches, transferring the mails and provisions over the ice from a point inside the jetties, where she remained about three hours. Seven persons made their way over the mile of ice between the shore and the steamer and thus took passage for the mainland. The following Friday (February 26) the steamer reached her dock at Nantucket, after which date there were no more interruptions in the service on account of ice.

## 1907.

Nantucket was isolated this year from Saturday, February 23, to Sunday, March 3, a period of eight days. As the ice conditions were threatening, steamer Nantucket returned to Woods Hole an hour or so after her arrival on Saturday, and remained there a full week. Through the efforts of Congressman Greene the revenue cutter Dexter was ordered to the relief of Nantucket on March 2d, but to the disappointment of the islanders she brought neither mails, passengers or provisions, the captain being entirely ignorant of the full importance of his errand, coming direct to Nantucket from New London. The cutter left for Woods Hole early Sunday morning, and shortly after her departure the steamer Nantucket made her way into the harbor, after her week's absence, her arrival bringing the embargo to an end.

## 1908.

In February of this year Nantucket was cut off from the mainland for four days—from Saturday, the 8th, to Wednesday, the 12th. A large amount of soft ice had been drifting about the sound for two weeks and the steamer had frequently met with large fields, on her trips, with considerable ice in the harbor. A sudden cold snap on the 6th, lasting two days, hardened the ice, and when the steamer left for Woods Hole, Saturday morning, she ran through a couple of miles of slush ice after rounding Brant point. Had difficulty in entering Woods Hole harbor, but returned to Nantucket late in the afternoon with the temperature at 3 above zero. Sunday morning Captain Furber decided to make an effort to reach Woods Hole, but the intense cold had

toughened the ice and after battling for three hours in the effort to reach clear water, the attempt was abandoned and the Nantucket made her way back to the wharf. The next day the weather commenced to moderate and by Wednesday the ice had softened so that the steamer could break out, after about four hours' butting outside of Brant point. The steamer returned to the island on Thursday, resuming her regular trips on Friday, the 14th.

This was the last "freeze-up" experienced by Nantucket at this writing, the years 1909 and 1910 having been comparatively mild, and the harbor almost entirely free from ice from December to March both winters, with few interruptions in the steamboat service.

The winter of 1908-09 was notable for the large amount of foggy weather extending from December to March. It was on Saturday, the 23d of January, 1909, that steamer Republic was in collision and sank off Nantucket, and the same day steamer Nantucket, in attempting to enter Woods Hole channel in the fog, struck on a rock off Nobska and stove a hole in her hull, which mishap placed her out of commission until February 9th.

Between December 1, 1908, and March 1, 1909, the steamer missed but thirteen trips, and the same period of the following winter was even better as far as mild weather was concerned, for the steamer missed only eight trips in five months, and ran for fifteen weeks continuously without a break in communication, plying her passages regularly from February 4th to May 20th.

## THE STORY OF THE "CAMELS."

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In connection with the "Story of the Island Steamers," past and present, it seems fitting to present a brief sketch of the "camels," that unique marine institution which made its appearance at Nantucket in the year 1842, and in the operation of which the steamer "Massachusetts" supplied the necessary power for towing the camels and the ships which they bore between the harbor and the deep water outside the bar. The camels were really huge floating dry-docks for carrying ships over the bar, where the depth of water had been gradually decreasing since 1830. They were built at Nantucket in the spring of 1842, under the superintendency of the late Peter F. Ewer, but the project was looked upon with disfavor from the very start, the men who formed themselves into the Camel Company meeting with all sorts of embarrassment and lack of sympathy in their efforts to bring their scheme to a successful climax.

At that period the depth of water on Nantucket bar was very slight and it was the custom for Nantucket ships to go over to Edgartown to load for sea or to be lightered of their cargoes before being able to leave or enter their home port. This fact, although very unsatisfactory to the Nantucket people, as it curtailed the profits from the voyages, seemed the only alternative until Ewer hit upon his camel scheme, and although Mr. Ewer was firmly convinced that the camels could be operated successfully and heavily laden ships brought in by them over Nantucket bar, he received all sorts of discouragement and had an up-hill road from the first.

### DETAILED DESCRIPTION.

The "camels" were a queer-looking craft, very much like two long, large boxes floating side by side, and held together at the ends by very large iron chains. The outer sides were almost

straight up and down, but the inner sides were curved, making, when the two sections were drawn together, an interior basin, just the shape of the bottom of a ship. The plan was for the camels to be separated far enough to allow the ship to be hauled into this basin between the two sections, then to be drawn and held fastened together by the chains, holding the ship between them, so that the camels and the ship could then be towed over the shallow places in the channel, to the wharf, as a heavy load might be carried over a desert upon the backs of two camels walking side by side.

Being flat-bottomed, the camels could float in water very much shallower than a loaded ship required, and if the two sections could be hauled together under the ship and held there by chains, they could lift the vessel so that both camels and ship would float in water not more than seven feet deep. This would permit ships to come from sea directly to the wharves and be unloaded there, and ships could be loaded at the wharves ready for sea and taken out to deep water by the camels, starting at once upon their voyages.

When completed the camels were each 135 feet long, with a depth of 19 feet, and a width of 29 feet on the bottom and 20 feet on deck. They drew 2 feet 10 inches on a level, and were connected by fifteen chains, five of 1 1-2 inch and ten of 1 3-8 inch, which bore eight hundred tons weight, it requiring two hundred tons to sink the camels a foot into the water. Each camel was divided into two parts, the "lower hold," and "between decks." To get the camels under the ship, it was necessary to sink them to the proper depth, and to do this the lower hold of each camel was built with several chambers, into which the water could be admitted through "gates" which could be readily opened or closed, as occasion required.

On the bottom of each camel, inside, was a long trough or "raceway" about four feet wide and 1 1-2 feet high, running through the camels from stern to bow, by means of which the water was let in from without, and from which the lower water rooms were filled. When the chambers were filled with water, each camel sank so that the bottom of the interior basin was below the bottom of the ship. The vessel was then hauled in, the



two sections of the camels were drawn together and securely held there by the massive chains, the water gates were closed, the water was pumped from the chambers, and the camels, thus lightened, gradually rose, lifting the ship with them, and were ready to be towed together over the bar and the inner flats and shoals, to the wharf.

Each camel held 12,000 barrels of water, the lower hold alone containing 8,000 barrels. This water was forced out by a double action pump of 2 feet stroke and 16-inch cylinder, worked by a 6 horse-power engine, and throwing 30 barrels of water per minute, and with this volume of water being drawn from the camels it would not require a very long time in order to raise a ship out of the water sufficiently to tow her over the bar. Upon arriving near the wharf, where the water was sufficiently deep, the flood gates were opened again, letting the water into the chambers, and the camels gradually sank, letting the ship down as gently as they had previously raised her. The chains were then loosened, the camels moved apart, and the ship was warped up to her berth, after which the water was once more pumped out of the camels, which rose again and were ready for the next job.

Each camel was equipped with a steam engine, which operated the powerful pumps by which the water was drawn from the chambers, and also turned the windlasses which wound up the heavy chains by which the two sections of the camels were fastened together. Each camel was also provided with a propeller, so that when there was no ship between them, each was a sort of individual steamboat, and able to go from place to place under its own steam.

There was plenty of pessimism lingering about while the construction of the camels was in progress, and even the men who worked in the building of the camels were sometimes scoffed at by boys on the streets, and Mr. Ewer, the promoter of the project, was looked upon as "a man with a fool scheme in his head." Nevertheless, he kept on with the work, and in August announced that the camels were ready for use. Having little faith in the success of the venture, ship-owners were not inclined to have their vessels experimented with, but, nevertheless, all were

anxious to witness the success or failure of the scheme, so, finally, C. Mitchell & Co., owners of the ship Phebe, gave their consent for that craft to be used in the trial.

### FIRST TRIAL A FAILURE.

The vessel being about ready for sea, on Monday, August 22, 1842, it was decided to make a test of the strength and practicality of the innovation. While the sinking of the camels was well under way, preparatory to the \*Phebe being run into them, a plank burst from the side of one of the water rooms, owing to the immense pressure, and the rush of water put out the fires and brought the first experiment to a halt. The next afternoon a second attempt was made, but a mistake in the orders to close the stern gates caused one of the camels to heel over so as to threaten danger to the ship, and it was not until the following Saturday, August 27, that the owners of the Phebe would give their consent for a third trial. On the following Sunday, preparations for this important event were completed and the experiment was actually under way. This attempt resulted even more disastrously than the other two, the mishap which befell the camels being described by the late Frederick C. Sanford as follows:

"When the camels were made ready for sea, the Phebe was taken out by the Telegraph into the deep water off Brant point, where the camels were sunk and the ship taken in. The powerful chain cables with which the camels were joined together, had not been received at the time, and fifteen sets of chain cables were borrowed, belonging to ships at the wharf. When the Phebe was enclosed in the camels and the latter were raising her, these chains began to snap asunder, and as each one parted the others became weaker, and soon all of them gave way and the ship went down between the camels into the water. You could hear each chain go off with a noise like a cannon, which was heard clearly in all parts of the town. The ship's copper was supposed to be damaged by the accident, rendering her unfit for immediate

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\*The ship Phebe was condemned at Pernambuco in October, 1846; the Constitution at Nantucket in 1856; and the Rambler at Navigator Islands in 1856.

sea service, so it was necessary to take the Phebe back and heave her out again."

The ship \*Constitution, owned by Charles G. & Henry Coffin, was next ready for sea, and notwithstanding the mishap in the case of the Phebe, they willingly offered to have their ship taken out, to prove to the islanders that the camels were a success. Nothing occurred to mar the successful operation of the scheme, and it required only forty-two minutes to take the Constitution from Brant point to the bar, steamer "Massachusetts" towing the outfit to deep water, where the camels were sunk, the chains released and the ship slid forth and sailed away on her voyage, September 23, 1842.

#### "PERU" FIRST SHIP BROUGHT IN BY CAMELS.

The first ship brought in from sea in the camels was the Peru, belonging to David Joy, which came in with 1340 barrels of sperm oil, from the east coast of Africa. The steamer "Telegraph" was running between Nantucket and New Bedford at the time, and on her return trip Friday, October 14th, took the Peru in tow at Holmes Hole, and brought her down to Nantucket bar, where she remained at anchor until the following day, when she was "camelled" into the harbor in tow of steamer "Massachusetts," which had greater power than the old "Telegraph" and was used for towing the camels when they were laden.

The second ship brought in was the Daniel Webster, belonging to Jared Coffin and Christopher Wyer, in October, and upon this occasion the island schools were closed for the day, that the boys and girls of Nantucket might witness the successful operation of the camels. The third incoming ship to use the camels was the \*Rambler, which belonged to Frederick C. Sanford, returning from a voyage in November, and the last and fourth ship to be camelled in 1842 was the Ontario.

The only other ship taken out by the camels that year, besides the Constitution, was the James Loper. This ship was ready for sea on Saturday, and the following morning (Sunday, October 30, 1842,) she was taken out by the camels. The local press reported the event as follows:

"Nantucket harbor is now made accessible to loaded ships of 500 tons, by the use of the camels. On Sunday last the ship James Loper,



Steamer "Massachusetts" Towing the Ship Constitution out of Nantucket Harbor in the "Camels," on the 23d of September, 1842. From Painting by Wendell Macy, owned by Joseph C. Brock of Nantucket.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and titles.

2. The second part of the document is a list of names and titles.

3. The third part of the document is a list of names and titles.

of which Levi Starbuck is owner, was taken over the bar by these stupendous and useful beasts of burden, and immediately put to sea. The ship, when freed from the camels, drew 15 feet of water; the camels, bearing the ship, drew seven feet. At twenty minutes past nine, the steamboat Massachusetts took them in tow and in 46 minutes after passing Brant point, carried them over the bar. In one hour and fourteen minutes after crossing the bar, the ship was clear of the camels, with her pennons floating to the breeze, having on board all her men and outfits for a whaling voyage of four years. Her anchor was placed on her bows when she left the wharf and will not be dropped again until she has doubled Cape Horn and arrived at Tahiti. She is the first ship that ever sailed from Nantucket on a Pacific ocean voyage under such circumstances. At 4.15 p. m. the steamer was again attached to the camels, and brought them into the harbor in forty-five minutes, it being low water at the time."

#### COST AND RUNNING EXPENSES.

The Nantucket camels cost a little over \$26,000, and by their use a saving of between \$150 and \$200 on each vessel was made over the former method of taking the ships over to Edgartown to prepare for sea or discharge their cargoes, or a saving of over \$300 to the owners from the time a ship left the Nantucket wharf at the commencement of the voyage until she reached it again.

The Camel Company's estimate of the running expenses of the camels, of the income to be derived from their operation, and the comparison of the difference to ship owners by the use of the camels, against the method of sending vessels over to Edgartown to load and discharge, contains some very interesting figures. It is appended herewith:

**Comparative Cost to Nantucket Ship Owners Via Edgartown  
versus Camels.**

**Outward and Inward Bound at Edgartown.**

**OUTWARD BOUND.**

Lightering ship of 350 1-2 tons	\$1.00 00
Pilot to Edgartown	15 00
Steamboat to tow the ship	75 00
Extra labor loading at Edgartown	50 00
Wharfage, storage, victualling, watering, watching, losses, agent's expenses, etc.	100 00
$\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. extra insurance of ship and cargo to Edgartown, (\$25,000)	87 50
	<b>\$437.50</b>

**INWARD BOUND.**

2,254 $\frac{1}{4}$ barrels oil, and sun- dries, from Edgartown, being the average lighter account for the last five years, on 92 ships, at 12 cents	\$270 54
Steamboat from Edgartown	75 00
Pilot from Edgartown	15 00
Losses, expenses, provisions, etc., at Edgartown	100 00
$\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. extra insurance on \$40,000 (and many are worth \$80,000)	100 00
	<b>\$560 54</b>
<b>TOTAL COST BY EDGARTOWN.</b>	
Outward bound	\$437 50
Inward bound	560 54
	<b>\$998 04</b>

Total cost per ship

\$998 04

**Outward and Inward Bound With Camels**

**OUTWARD BOUND.**

To take ship of 350 $\frac{1}{4}$ tons (being the average tonnage of our ships) over the bar, and place her in four fathoms of water, with camels, at 60 cents per ton	\$210 30
For steamboat to tow camels and ship	50 00
	<b>\$260 30</b>
Balance in favor of camels on each outward bound ship	\$177 20

**INWARD BOUND.**

For 1943 $\frac{1}{4}$ barrels of whale and sperm oil, and other articles equal to 311 3-16 barrels, mak- ing 2254 $\frac{1}{4}$ barrels average light- er account of 92 ships for the last 5 years, at 17 cents per barrel	\$383 26
For steamboat to tow camels and ship	50 00
	<b>\$433 26</b>

Balance in favor of camels on each inward bound ship	\$127 28
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**TOTAL COST BY CAMELS.**

Outward bound	\$260 30
Inward bound	433 26
	<b>\$693 56</b>
Total cost per ship	\$693 56
Balance in favor of camels	\$304 48

**Company's Estimate of Expenses and Earnings of Camels,  
Compiled August 15, 1842.**

**YEARLY EXPENSES.**

Foreman and engineer	\$500 00
Twenty day's labor, for one day in fixing shores and bilge- blocks under ships, and, say we have 20 ships in and 20 ships out, making 40 days' labor for 20 men—800 days' labor at \$1.25 per day	1,000 00
Wharfage for one year	100 00
Repairs will average yearly	200 00
Fuel, oil, etc., for the two 4- horse engines for one year	150 00
Incidental expenses	500 00
Insurance at 2 per cent. on \$20,000	400 00
Agent's salary yearly	500 00
	<b>\$3,350 00</b>
<b>Total expense of the camels</b>	

**EARNINGS.**

To carry over the bar 20 out- ward bound ships at 60 cents per ton, our ships averaging 350 $\frac{1}{4}$ tons, is \$210.30 per ship, and twenty ships	\$4,206 00
To carry over the bar 20 inward- bound ships of 2,254 $\frac{1}{4}$ barrels each—lighter account per ship being the average for the last five years of 18 $\frac{1}{4}$ ships per year, at 17 cents per bar- rel, is	7,665 30
Total yearly earnings of camels	<b>\$11,871 30</b>
Net profit yearly to stockhold- ers on an investment of \$20,000, is \$8,521.30 or 32 3-4 per cent,	

The use of camels for transporting ships was no new experiment, as they were invented and used by M. M. Bakker in Holland, as early as 1688, and took their name from their great strength. They were first built by the Dutch at Amsterdam, for the purpose of taking large ships over the Pampas, a passage between two sand banks in the Zuyder Zee, opposite the mouth of the river Y, about six miles from the city of Amsterdam. The Russians also used camels for taking their large ships over the shoals that were formed at Neva, and, when the Nantucket camels were built, were using camels there of various sizes, some as large as 217 feet long and 36 feet in breadth. Camels were also used at Venice, and at each of these places they were handled successfully and with profit.

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#### WILLIAM R. EASTON'S STORY.

Regarding the Nantucket camels, the late William R. Easton wrote for the Nantucket Warder in 1845 as follows:

"Much has been said for and against the Nantucket camels and the Camel Company. Concerning the action of the corporation, I leave the public to judge. But as regards the camels themselves, they have performed nobly all that was expected of them, and even more. They were built under every embarrassment. The time was not so long ago, but that we can all remember the hue and cry that was raised against them. We can all of us look back to that day when scarcely a single friend was found to raise his voice in their favor. Many said, with apparent reasonableness, that lard oil was such a dangerous rival to sperm, that the prosperity of Nantucket was as good as lost. What need, then, for camels? Even should they be required, the present set would by no means answer. Some thought them too large, others too small; and it was the general opinion that ships raised by them would be much injured. Often it was confidently asserted that they would last but two or three years. And again, many were of the opinion that there was an advantage in sending ships to Edgartown to load. What this advantage is, I do not know. Were there any, it strikes me that our New Bedford friends are a long time discovering that it is for their interest to send their ships twenty-five miles or more from home to load



them, instead of preparing them for sea at their own wharves. It would be well, perhaps, for a few among us to call to mind the expression then used—that they should not wish to live longer than to see a ship brought over the bar and landed safely in our harbor by the camels. Inherent love for life might prompt them to take back that wish. But the days of scoffing are over. The prejudiced have been forced to open their eyes; and it is useless to hold up the picture of folly, which they presented to the world by their actions some years back.

Let us take a slight review of what the camels have done since they were built. We shall see that the favor of the Nantucket people towards them has increased very fast from year to year. The only reason why less ships took advantage of the camels in 1844 than in 1843, was that during the first mentioned year, the camels were not in working condition, in consequence of certain alterations and additions that were going on.

In 1842, fourteen ships arrived and thirteen sailed, total twenty-seven. Out of these, four were taken in by the camels, and two carried out. Although the six ships that were camelled seem but a few in comparison with the twenty-one that were lightered, still we must remember that the camels were not launched until the middle of summer, and that this was the first year of their existence, when doubts as to the safety of the operation ranged at the highest pitch. We must recollect that the imminent peril of the *Phebe* was still fresh in the minds of the ship-owners. How much praise should we bestow on that noble firm, Messrs. Charles & Henry Coffin, who, with the disaster of the *Phebe* before their eyes, promptly came up and offered for trial their uninsured ship, *Constitution*, that was then ready for sea. God grant that they may continue to prosper until the ultimate of their wishes shall be attained. The ships taken in during this year were the *Peru*, the *Daniel Webster*, the *Rambler* and the *Ontario*. Those carried out were the *Constitution* and the *James Loper*.

In 1843, fifteen ships arrived and eighteen sailed; total thirty-three. Of these, nineteen were lightered, and the remaining fourteen camelled. The following were brought in by the camels: *Richard Mitchell*, *Zenas Coffin*, *Congress*, *Catharine*, *Young*

Eagle, Washington, Catawba. The following were carried out: Zenas Coffin, Mary, Richard Mitchell, Barclay, Atlantic, Spartan, Catawba.

In 1844, fifteen ships arrived and nineteen sailed; total thirty-four, out of which twenty-three were lightered and the remaining eleven camelled. The following were brought in by the camels: Alex, Coffin, Peruvian. The following were carried out: Henry Clay, Lexington, Mariner, Phenix, Peruvian, Mount Vernon, Henry Astor, Harvest, Omega.

In 1845, twenty-eight ships arrived and twenty-nine sailed; total fifty-seven. Out of these, eleven were lightered, and one was prepared for sea at, and sent away from, Boston, and the remaining forty-five were camelled. To these we may add, perhaps, the Ohio, that, having been sold, was taken when light over the bar by the camels. Those ships raised and brought into the harbor were the following: Charles and Henry, Levi Starbuck, Franklin, Montana, Ohio, Navigator, Obed Mitchell, Nantucket, Japan, American, Monticello, Edward Carey, Elizabeth Starbuck, Foster, David Paddack, United States, Narragansett, Three Brothers, Napoleon, Alpha, Columbia. The ships taken out by the camels were as follows: Cyrus, Norman, Charles and Henry, Ohio (light), Sarah Parker, Christopher Mitchell, Navigator, Franklin, Ganges, Orion, Levi Starbuck, John Adams, Montana, Nantucket, Potomac, Martha, Japan, Edward Carey, Monticello, American, Foster, David Paddack, United States, Enterprise, Elizabeth Starbuck.

On May 7th, 8th and 9th, it so happened that three ships were camelled; one on each day. From July 12th to 16th inclusive, six ships were camelled; one on the 12th, two on the 13th, one on the 15th, and two on the 16th. From August 12th to 14th inclusive, three ships were camelled. On October 18th, two were brought in, the David Paddack and the United States. On December 8th and 9th, three were camelled in the course of twenty-four hours.

The quantity of oil brought in during the year 1845 was as follows:

Sperm oil, lightered .....	10,471 bbls.
Whale oil, lightered .....	2,141 bbls.
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Total .....	12,612 bbls.
Sperm oil, camelled .....	34,991 bbls.
Whale oil, camelled .....	3,251 bbls.
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Total .....	50,854 bbls.

The camel company employs about one-half of their men the year round, which ensures much greater dispatch and safety in operation over their first method of engaging operatives for the trip only, and having constantly to instruct new men. Much credit is due to the present captain of the camels, John H. Pease, for his skill in the management of them. In the operation of carrying a ship over the bar, it takes now, on an average, fifty-six minutes to sink the camels, preparatory to the reception of the ship; forty-five more are occupied in heaving in the chains and making them fast. It requires fifty minutes to pump them out, an hour and a quarter to go from the harbor to the back of the bar; and then at the expiration of fifty minutes more, which time is occupied in sinking the camels, the ship is let out, and may be ready for sea. The first vessel taken out (the Constitution) was only forty-two minutes in going from the harbor to the back of the bar. The present company has expended rising thirteen thousand dollars, in addition to the sum first paid for the camels, in supplying them with new steam engines and pumps of greater power. When they shall have completed those additions and alterations, which they are now making and which they intend to make, the camels will be brought to such a state of perfection, that with favorable weather, a shorter time, even than is now required, will be occupied in taking a ship up to a less draught of water than when light, transporting her over the bar, and placing her again in her accustomed element.

There has been no detention to any ship, in consequence of using the camels, during the past year, except in the cases of the ships Ohio, American and Enterprise; the first two having grounded on the bar during a course of extremely low tides, when no ship could have gone over the bar, light; and the last

having been detained six hours, on account of an accident which happened to one of the between-deck scuttles. Such alterations are now going on as will prevent another detention of the latter kind.

With the improvements which have been made, and are now making, and the experience of the men connected with the camels, I am fully convinced that the continued patronage of the ship owners is the only thing that is necessary to make the marine camels all, and more than all, that was ever anticipated by their most sanguine friends. And as long as the whale fishery is pursued by our merchants, they never will do without camels. Some even may be in existence now, who may see a second set built. Should this happen, experience will enable the builders to construct a much better set at a far less expense."

#### CAMELS BROKEN UP.

Nantucket's whaling industry was on the decline at this period, and although the camels were operated successfully for a number of years, they were really built too late, for the island business soon decreased to such an extent that there was no further use for them, and they were broken up in 1854—twelve years after their construction. The last ship on record as being brought into Nantucket harbor by the camels was the *Martha*, which arrived at the bar on June 8th, 1849, and was "cameled" the following day. During the last few years the camels were operated, the local press made little mention of them in connection with the arrival and departure of ships. The general appearance of the camels is preserved in an interesting model of this queer example of marine architecture of sixty-eight years ago and is in the possession of the Nantucket Historical Association and on exhibition in its rooms on Fair street.

## A FEW REMINISCENCES.

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(By a Correspondent in *The Inquirer and Mirror*, 1872.)

The writer with his family, on one summer's day, was patiently and anxiously waiting at Woods Hole the arrival of the old steamer to take him to Nantucket, and wondered why she was so long delayed, for she was behind time. On her arrival the mystery was solved. A number of the leading Abolitionists of Boston, including Mr. Garrison and his associates, had arrived at New Bedford on their way to attend the quarterly meeting of the Nantucket Anti-Slavery Society. Their number was largely increased at New Bedford, a majority of whom were colored persons. Before leaving the wharf at New Bedford, the question arose as to the rights of the colored portion of the company on the boat. They were restricted to the forward decks only; this was of course resisted by the Boston members of the company, and by a refusal to proceed, but to charter a vessel to convey them. Of course the captain did not like to lose the fees of so large a company and much detention ensued in settling this question. The matter was finally settled by a compromise, granting the company the freedom of the promenade deck, and they proceeded to their destination. Of course it was not to be expected that, in the discussion of the meeting, the steamboat company would be spared; they were not. Men like Mr. Garrison, Quincy and Pillsbury, handled the matter without gloves. It was at this meeting that Frederick Douglass, who was one of the company from New Bedford, made his maiden speech, if not then in "thoughts that breathe, in words and facts that burned" from his own experience in slavery, yet in a rough, awkward manner, compared with his now finished style; thence he took his departure into public life, to reach the fame he has.

So severely was the conduct of the steamboat company hand-

led, the agent Barker especially, that the day on which the company were to leave, he commanded the boat himself, and refused to take a single one of the company from the island. There happened to be a vessel there from Hyannis, whose captain was a kindred spirit with the meeting, who volunteered to take the company to New Bedford. The writer remained a few days and was then taken to Falmouth, whither he was bound, by a vessel from Waquoit, which had been there with a cargo of wood.

What a change now in the public sentiment of the people; these very people, then represented by a portion of that company, who were refused admission aft of the wheels of the boat, are now courted by political parties for their suffrages, especially at Presidential elections, and Frederick Douglass, the prominent man of that company, though then hardly known, is the prominent man now who heads the Republican electoral ticket of the great State of New York in 1872. And our floating palaces of steamboats, that ply upon the waters of our sounds and rivers, compared with which the old Telegraph was not to be noticed, admit this class of people to all parts of the boat, to any berth or stateroom they may choose to pay for, and to any table in the modern style they may select; in other words, accord to them equal rights. That was in olden times; this is in the new.

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(By J. E. C. Farnham, in *The Inquirer and Mirror*, April 9, 1910.)

My earliest recollection centres in the steamers "Massachusetts" and the "Telegraph" or the "Nebraska," if you choose, as the last named craft had the distinction of the two names at the time when I knew her. How well I remember those old boats! In fancy I can see them now, moored at the steamboat wharf (as we then called it), the "Telegraph" in the slip, and the "Massachusetts" at the side of the wharf headed toward the harbor.

I carefully studied the printed picture shown of the "Telegraph". I wondered if it was really accurate and a correct likeness of the old boat. I was a boy nine years old when the "Massachusetts" and "Telegraph" were sold and left Nantucket, yet nevertheless, their general appearance is now very vivid in my memory. Recalling the appearance of these boats during the few

years I knew them as a boy, it seems to me that the old "Telegraph" was a more substantial boat, with greater length, and vastly more finished as to her second or upper deck than the picture represents.

The account of the wrecked New York-Havre packet "Louis Philippe," stranded near Tom Never's Head, on December 17, 1847, and the part the old steamers "Massachusetts" and "Telegraph" played in saving that ill-fated craft, was to me a most interesting reminiscence, because of a personal touch. In the distribution of the \$31,000 salvage allowed by the Board of Underwriters and "awarded to the men who saved the vessel, Charles H. Farnham, boy on the 'Massachusetts,' received \$95.00." He was my oldest brother, a boy then 17 years of age.

The "Eagle's Wing," another steamboat of my boyhood days, is indelibly fixed in my mental vision. In fancy, I can vividly see her now, and only upon deliberate reflection can I fully realize that so many years have passed since her service with Nantucket and the mainland. A prominent feature of her final service in those now far-away days, as I remember, was the occasional excursions which she made from New Bedford to Nantucket. After my coming to Providence to live (June 2, 1864), I frequently heard mention of the "Eagle's Wing" as an excursion boat on the Providence river, and the familiarity of the name of that old boat then sounded to me like an echo from my "island home" which I had so recently left. Her sad fate, catching fire coming up the Providence river while engaged in a friendly race with the steamer "Perry" of the Newport line, finally being beached at the lower part of this city, burning to the water's edge, left a blackened and ruined hulk, as I learned of it soon after my residence here, was a most pathetic tale to my then youthful mind.

The advent of the "Island Home" at Nantucket was, and ever had been, an event of more than passing interest. I could not recall the date, but learn from your story that it was September 6, 1855. The incident, however, is firmly implanted in my memory. I was then a boy of a little more than six and a half years of age. At that time I was a pupil in the primary school in the old South Grammar School building on Orange street, in

the south-west room on the first floor. Our teacher was Miss Lydia B. Swain. When the new boat whistled as she first rounded Brant point, Miss Swain dismissed us children to the schoolyard on the east side of the building overlooking the harbor, and we had a fine view of the "Island Home" as she made her debut in Nantucket waters, circling the harbor two or three times, and then gracefully making her landing. What an impress the coming of that new boat on that beautiful early fall morning made on my young mind; how grateful I was to my thoughtful teacher—a gratitude which I have cherished and never forgotten, and which to her memory I have many times related.

The "River Queen," which had but a brief service at my native town, was a new boat on our Providence river, back in the sixties, soon after my coming to this city to live, and was then operated by the Newport Steamboat Company between Providence and Newport and as an excursion boat to Rocky point. She was built, if I mistake not, for this Steamboat Company and the Providence river (hence her name) and was a companion of the "Bay Queen" of the same company.

Providence, R. I., April, 1910.

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(By Alexander Starbuck, in *The Inquirer and Mirror*, April 23, 1910.)

My own memory runs back to the days of the Telegraph and Massachusetts. I remember them both well, and I remember Capt. Edward H. Barker, also. It seems to me that the Telegraph was renamed Nebraska only after extensive changes had been made in her. My impression is that the law did not allow any change in the registered name of a vessel without certain formalities were gone through with, and I should think the records of the Custom House would show if they were made and if the boat ever was registered under the new name.

I remember very well when the Massachusetts and Telegraph left Nantucket for good. I was flat on my back at the time, making the most desperate struggle for life I ever have made. That was in 1858. As I recall the circumstances, the Fourth of July came on Sunday in that year, and immediately after midnight that night the boats left the wharf for their new



destinations. I believe our Baptist friends proposed to toll their bell for the sins of the nation for quite a protracted period on Monday, a condition of affairs which, in my then weakened state, caused me much uneasiness, but the more thoughtful members of the Society persuaded their associates to forego that audible expression of reproof, and my mind was set at rest.

I remember quite distinctly the freeze-up of the winter of 1856-7, for we boys had a great time skating on the harbor. I remember two or three of us one day skated out to the bar, where the ice was piled up twelve or fifteen feet high. We skated up harbor, too, as far as off Polpis harbor. The boys made ice-boats of their sleds and had a fine time sailing them. The sleighing, as I recall it, was wholly over on the Creek shore side and up towards Abram's Point. It did not seem to me particularly safe, but there were no accidents. John P. Hussey was the newsdealer at the time and he occupied a portion of the front shop of Pinkham & Starbuck (now occupied by Louis Coffin & Co.) on the corner of Main and Fair streets. When the accumulated papers were finally delivered to him he bundled them up in packages containing the entire four weeks' dailies, and whoever wanted to purchase a paper had to take the entire package. During the freeze-up he had sold every story paper and story book he had accumulated for years and the public misfortune was a God-send to him. As I recall, there was no distress for want of any necessities, but I remember that lemons were quoted at 50 cents each.

I remember very well the process of sawing out a channel for the steamboat from the open water at the bar to the dock, and breaking the ice into cakes by exploding bottles partly filled with gun-powder and sunk in holes in the ice, the powder being ignited by means of a red-hot nail dropped into a tin tube which passed through the cork, a slide in the tube preventing the nail reaching the powder until released by means of a lanyard, which allowed the operator to be at a safe distance. The ice was broken up when the tide was ebbing, so that the cakes were carried out to sea. There were many venturesome lads who crossed from one side to the other on the floating cakes and some of them had narrow escapes from

being carried out to sea. When the channel was finally completed and the Island Home steamed majestically through the water course thus formed, scores of us boys skated alongside of her, when she made her return trip to the wharf.

The campaign for "Two Boats a Day" I remember distinctly, for I was one of the quartet who fought it. It originated with Joseph S. Barney, a man who loved Nantucket devotedly and who, for many years, gave unstintingly of thought, time, labor and money to advance the material interests of his native island. He was on the directorate of the Steamboat Company at the time, I think, for he was one of the heaviest stockholders, and his fellow directors, especially on the Nantucket end, were opposed to his innovation. He enlisted the Rev. Ferdinand C. Ewer, of New York, William Breed Drake, of Meadville, Pa., and myself, in the cause, and you will scarcely find an issue of the *Mirror* of those days that did not have a communication from one of us on the subject, endeavoring to work up the public sentiment so that pressure would be brought upon the other directors to bring them in line. The plan was finally adopted, and, as I recall, Mr. Barney was made superintendent.

I recall seeing the Camels steaming around in the harbor. My recollection of their transporting a vessel is a trifle hazy, I often went down to William P. Ceeley's sail-loft on Commercial wharf and watched them. The eastern-most loft was owned by a man named Scheffelin and the one next west was Mr. Ceeley's.

Waltham, Mass., April, 1910.

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*(By Alfred Bunker, May 10, 1910.)*

My earliest recollection of the Nantucket steamboats includes the "Telegraph," which, during the Kansas-Nebraska troubles, was, as has been stated, partially (though I think not and one of my boyhood playmates, James H. Barker, Jr., who afterwards became one of the leading railroad men of the West, was the son of the captain of one and afterwards of the other

of these boats, and still later of the "Eagle's Wing."

I well recall the sloop "Portugal" and her successor "Tawtemeo" (said to be the Indian name of the Hummock pond,) the packets which carried the mail on the intermediate steamboat days. I remember, also, the tall flag-pole in the rear of the postoffice, upon which was hoisted a flag to show that the approaching mail packet or steamer was in sight from the Unitarian tower. A red flag with an "M" in the centre was flown when it was the "Massachusetts," and a blue, white and blue when it was the packet. A black ball replaced the flag when the mail reached the postoffice, which ball, enveloped in a white cover, also notified the people when the California mail arrived. Upon these latter events, a long line of citizens sallied to the postoffice, hoping to receive letters from the numerous relatives and friends in that far-off Eldorado, each person carrying one or more half-dollars, which was the amount due for postage upon each letter from California in the early days, the postage not being prepaid.

I remember also the "Jersey Blue," the propeller which ran between Nantucket and New York, whose short career has been noted. My principal recollection of her is that, while she was in service, an ocean steamer, short of coal, anchored off the east end of the island, and the captain came ashore and bought, at a good price, the coal on the wharf belonging to the "Jersey Blue." He paid Nantucket "car-men" another good price to take it in bags out to Quidnet, or thereabouts, whence it was carried in boats to the waiting steamer lying at anchor.

I can also recollect the "camels," although they had gone out of use before I was old enough to be around the wharves, and by that time were going to decay, lying abandoned at the head of the dock between the Old South and Commercial wharves.

Perhaps the pleasantest steamboat reminiscence to the boys of those days was connected with the towing of whaleships to and from the "bar" or Edgartown (then popularly known as "Oldtown.") When a whaleship about to go to sea, was ready to go over the bar, or a whaleship returned from sea had anchored in deep water "back of the bar" and had been

lightered sufficiently to come into the harbor, we boys knew that the steamboat would be called upon to do the towing, and that if we were at the wharf when she started upon the trip, some of us, at least, might be so fortunate as to be allowed to be free passengers upon that (to us) "excursion." These towing trips were sometimes made on Sunday, when the steamer was at liberty, but usually in the late afternoon, after passengers, baggage and freight had been landed.

Careful inquiry gave fortunate boys information when a towing trip was intended, and on those days an unusual number of them on the steamboat wharf showed that something was up. After waiting rather impatiently for the baggage and freight to be landed, all who could get permission from the officers of the steamer scrambled on board, and had a very enjoyable outing. I remember one of these trips that came near having a tragic ending. The steamer arrived back at the wharf after dark, and without waiting for the gang-plank to be run out, the boys clambered up upon the bow rail one after another, like sheep going over a wall, and jumped upon the wharf and ran out to the road. Suddenly, one boy failed to keep his footing as he reached the wharf and fell with his head upon the ground, and the next boy, unable to stop himself, came down, his feet just missing the head of the fallen boy, which otherwise would have been fatally crushed. Where are the boys of those days? Scattered all over the earth; most of them passed beyond our horizon into "the Great Beyond."

Roxbury, Mass., May, 1910.

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*By the late William R. Easton, in The Inquirer and Mirror,  
October 12, 1872.*

"In the absence of any written history of the manufactures of our island, accuracy in relation to amount and periods at which the various manufactures were established, is out of the question. The following is from the tablets of memory, chiefly of the writer's, and hence imperfection will attend our efforts to contribute in some small measure, matter to swell the pages of our as yet unwritten and much-desired history. Establish-

ments for the manufacture of sperm oil and candles were probably the first put into operation in the annals of Nantucket. When, subsequently, the manufacture of whale and elephant's oils were added, and the number of manufactories were increased to thirty-six, the greatest number in operation at any one time, the annual product of these institutions must have reached from one to one and one-half millions of dollars.

The manufacture of such large quantities of oils, and the fitting of so many ships, ninety the greatest number at one period, besides many smaller craft, involved the manufacture of casks, packages for candles, boats, iron work on an extensive scale, duck into sails, cordage, aggregating in amount at least one hundred and sixty thousand dollars annually. We think the amount is not over-stated when we consider that white oak casks, equalling at least fifty thousand barrels, turned out from some twenty-two coopers' shops, iron work from more than half as many blacksmiths, thirty-five thousand candle boxes, from eighty to one hundred whale boats, some fifteen hundred bolts of duck, wrought into sails, etc., were the yearly requirements, chiefly, of the principal business of this isolated community. The greatest number of rope-walks in operation at any one time was ten, where nearly all the cordage used by the whaling fleet and other vessels were made, until Winslow Lewis put into market his patent cordage, and from that time their decline commenced and continued, until not a vestige of them is left; even the outdoor cod-line spinning of the Dows, on the cliff, has surrendered to health and pleasure-seeking gentlemen from abroad, who have purchased those delightful, airy sites for the future erection of summer residences.

A fulling and coloring mill was in operation on the island as early as the year 1772, and conducted by a Scotchman by the name of Nichols, with whom David Allen served his time, until he became master of the art and mystery of the business, when he was appointed conductor, and carried it on until about the year 1796 or 7. The mill was located over a small stream about half way between the Polpis public schoolhouse and the Milton house. Both the Scotchman and Mr. Allen resided near the mill while carrying it on. Mr. Allen, in a building that stood near the dwelling of Eliphalet Paddock, made the first cut-nails

